

2003-Eckhart-Tolle-Practicing-Presence-Retreat-Guide-for-Spiritual-Teacher-and-Health-Practitioner

[Speaker 1] (4:27 - 3:36:07)

Welcome, it's good to feel that nobody's waiting for anything to happen since everybody here is an advanced practitioner of presence. However, it is miraculous to be in that state of not waiting for the next thing to happen. It's always miraculous.

And the deep seated mental habit of waiting for the next thing to happen may still occasionally come up from within you as impatience, restlessness. Get on with it. What's he waiting for?

We're wasting time. We have a lot to get through. We only have a day and a half.

But the good thing is we don't have anything to get through. The central core of this gathering, the gathering of friends, is, one could say, to deepen the state of presence. But language is so limited, it's never entirely true what one says about it.

Presence is already deep. Another way of putting it, we are here to recognize the inner space that's already as deep as it can be. And to recognize that there are basically two dimensions, one could say, in life, in your life.

And that's space and things in space. Now, things, I'm using that in a wider sense than the conventional sense of the word objects. That's also things.

But every thought is a thing. Every emotion is a thing. Not quite as clearly defined in form as a physical thing.

And yet, it has form. It's an energetic form. Every thought, every feeling, every emotion.

Sense perception, even a sense perception is something that arises, a form that arises within you. Because the entire room arises within you. The perception of this room, the auditory perception of the voice, the visual perception, is happening, one could say, within you.

Certain sense data being transmitted via the nerves as impulses. They reach the brain in some strange way, and then they're reassembled in some strange way that nobody completely understands. And then you get this image of this room in which you are sitting, listening to somebody.

Nobody really knows whether there's anything out there at all. Because to you, it's all within. So all these things arise within you, and then thoughts come as you sit there.

All these things, things. So the world consists of things, forms, and that to most people is all there is. That's what they identify with, certain forms.

They identify with every thought that arises, every emotion that comes. They are that. Every thought is completely captured by the thought that arises.

That implies that they believe in every thought completely. It's madness, of course. They believe that a thought could tell you what's real, can express some ultimate truth.

This is how it is, how he is, how she is, how they are. So that's to be absorbed in things. To lose yourself in things.

Many people in advanced countries, so-called, are obviously on one level. Everybody can see that they are lost in things because they're so concerned about things, material things, things that happen or don't happen, and then come the inner thoughts, the emotions, and everything draws people in. Things become invested with a sense of self, especially thoughts and emotions.

And then when you identify with something, that means you're seeking a self in it. You identify with a possession. The possession in itself is nothing.

The thought form that arises is important to you because it's invested with me and my. So most people's lives are absorbed by things in a wider sense. And you can see it, there's no ease.

They're never at rest because their life consists of one damn thing after another. And things never leave you alone. And for a moment, perhaps, it happens.

And then the next thing comes up and demands your attention or provokes you into identifying with it. It could be a thought that arises from within you or something that comes at you from someone else or some situation. And the world and the human mind, yes, it's there to provoke you to try.

You know what you see in films. I have not much personal experience with it, but in films when you see people want to fight, they go, come on, come on. And in a way, that's what the world does to you.

Come on, let's have a fight. Take me seriously. So easy to be lost in that.

I sometimes call it object consciousness. Every thought, the entire stream of thinking, the human mind, is one object after another. Sense perceptions, thoughts, emotions, object consciousness.

One comes one after another. I must think about this. Oh, what's that?

Oh, reaction. Consumed by that. Not realizing that there's a dimension in you that is vast, spacious, in which, yes, these objects float around.

And for some people, the first glimpse they have of that is when somehow the world went too far, provoked them too much and they just can't keep up anymore with reacting. And they say, I give up. That's how it is.

It's all collapsed. And that's how it is. The first taste of surrender to what is, which too many people come when they can't stand what is anymore.

The pressure of pain gets too much. They can't stand themselves anymore because what they think of themselves is a bundle of thought forms and emotions, objects, content of your mind, identifying with the content of your mind as a me. And I can't stand the content of your mind, my mind anymore.

It's torture, which means I can't carry the burden of myself anymore, the burden of self. I can't. It's heavier.

It gets heavier and more and more painful. And then comes a point where you get the first glimpse of, I can't fight it anymore. Can't fight what is, so I might as well accept what is.

Accept this moment. Ah. And suddenly, there's space.

The simple thing of accepting what is now, suddenly there's a space around that which you accept before there was no space around it. Well, there was, but you didn't realize it. There was no space around events, no space around sense perceptions, no space around reactions, no space around thoughts, crammed full with objects.

And suddenly, when you surrender to what is, there's a sense of depth in you. There's the event, whatever object there is, the thought, the emotion, anger, sadness, the story in the head about me and my life. All right.

And there's space around it suddenly, through the simple acceptance of the is-ness of this. And that's often through pain. Many of you had your first glimpses through suffering, couldn't stand yourself anymore, and perhaps didn't even realize what happened inside you.

And then you heard a teaching, a spiritual teaching came, perhaps pointed to it also. Yes, we could also call it stillness. The cessation of being absorbed by objects.

And so, you become who you always were, but didn't realize it. You become the space, the stillness, not that which happens, that which underlies what happens, always. And then you meet.

One day it happens that you meet someone, you come to an encounter, a human encounter, and you're meeting that person in, not as a bundle of thought forms, a me that wants something, or fears something, but as still, spacious presence. You're

meeting another human being in that state of openness that is just spacious presence, where they're simply looking, listening, stillness. And that means you have become a teacher, in a wider sense than the conventional sense of the word.

What the Course in Miracles calls a teacher of God. What we could call here a teacher of space. And of course, usually teaching means you're adding something to the other person.

Facts, information, knowledge, but you're not adding anything. So it's teaching in a different, different from the conventional sense. Something, one could almost say transmits itself in that encounter.

There is the arising of a unifying field of aware presence, a still, aware field. And that, I say unifying, because when you meet humans through the thinking mind, which immediately labels, judges, compares myself with them, expects something, demands something, fears something, wants something, you're not really meeting anybody. You're just creating the barriers of conceptual thought are there between you and that human being.

And the other person does it to you. So you become a teacher of presence the moment you meet someone in stillness. Not the stillness that is below thought, that you sometimes find when you drift off towards sleep.

And the mind gradually stops only to start up again the moment you start dreaming. That, it happens too that people experience a little bit of peace when they drift below thought towards sleep. They've been tortured all day long thinking about their problems.

And then you become peaceful as you drift towards sleep. But that's not where we are going, or that could happen to one or two of you. The stillness is not the stillness that is the stillness of the flower, or the stillness of a flower is beautiful for the flower.

The stillness of a tree, the stillness of an animal is beautiful for the tree, for the animal, and has a deep connection with the stillness that arises in you as you go beyond thought, in which there's no loss of consciousness. There's a great awareness, alertness, wakefulness in that stillness. And that is how you meet the other human being.

This is where listening becomes so important. To listen, because mostly when you meet another human being, they'll be speaking. Because human interactions are almost completely dominated by words.

So almost always when you meet somebody, they'll be saying something. And now let's just assume for a moment they're not provocative. They're not demanding an emotional reaction from you, which also happens a lot.

They're just saying something. This needs to be discussed. We need to talk about this.

This is a matter, and that's the matter, and some other matter. And you are listening without getting drawn into the mind stream, which is object consciousness. You are there as space consciousness.

Spacious awareness. And that space that arises somehow is not confined to this form. There is a spaciousness that contains the entire interaction when you meet someone like that.

The entire interaction, there's suddenly space in it, even though the other person may not notice it as space, may not perhaps notice it at all at first. Because the mind stream may be so overpowering that they're totally in the grip of it, because they are talking to you something that really we need to deal with this now. This is quite normal state.

Some people live like that continuously. Next thing, and the next thing. An entire civilization run by, like, with that energy.

And what a grace if somebody comes in and embodies space, spaciousness, and there's somebody who is trapped in object consciousness. At first, they may not notice anything as, but it does, little miracles you will see begin to happen around you as you begin to teach. Not formally, or informally, any encounter.

That's how every encounter, as A Course in Miracles puts it, is a holy encounter. Potentially. This is not in actuality.

Encounters are not holy. They have the potential of being holy. Most human encounters are totally dominated by mind.

And even if two priests meet, they will be totally dominated by object consciousness, and they will be talking about God. And there will be nothing holy about it, because it's concepts. But the moment that you are there as space, then a deeper dimension opens up.

And that is why we are here. To recognize that. To see that.

To be that. And yes, some of the things that are going to be said here are almost paradoxical, because we are using language that every word comes from object, the world of object consciousness. It's almost impossible to talk about space consciousness, because words are object consciousness.

So it's inevitable that paradoxes will come in when we talk about it, and then the mind might say, no, that can't be right. No, of course it's not right. The words, you need to have a lot of tolerance for words here, when words are used as pointers, not as explanations, or as the ultimate truth.

Simply pointers. They point beyond themselves when they are used in spiritual, true

spiritual discourse. Not a new philosophy, not an explanation, not the ultimate truth, not something to believe in, more object consciousness.

No, just pointer. So be peace-tolerant, have space around what you listen also, instead of getting in there and hanging on to a string of words and saying, no, I don't agree with that, that can't be right. You're right, it's not right.

It's only an approximation to the truth, a distant approximation to the truth. It points to it. The famous Buddhist saying, the finger pointing to the moon.

And you know, and then you look at the finger. Dogs do that, because they're not at home in the conceptual universe. The dogs will look at your finger.

Dog owners don't never learn that. They say, they go to their dog and say, it's there, there. And the dog looks, of course, at your finger.

And some people have had dogs for ten years and they're still doing it. So we are here to, to be, every word I say is wrong, but it's just, to learn to be that, which you already are completely, to learn to be that more fully. And you don't need time for that.

How can I learn to be it if I don't need time? I can't learn anything without time, says the mind. But that's the miracle.

That's what's happening here. So words are wonderful wisdom. The first line of the Tao Te Ching, which in my free translation is, reads, if you can talk about it, that's not it.

In more conventional translations, the Tao that can be spoken of is not the true Tao. That is a deep truth and that has to be said at the beginning. So important.

That is the first statement and that you need to remember throughout. And then he continued to talk about it. So we are here to, when you see how inadequate words are, you almost want to shut up.

I'm not going to say anything anymore because it's all wrong. Well, I'll say a little bit more. Now to, to realize that inner spaciousness, or just let's just say spaciousness, that is already your essential reality fully.

So you cannot add to spaciousness, because whatever you add to spaciousness will be an object. And even to say, I need to become more spacious isn't quite right. Because you're already as spacious and as deep as can be.

It's simply to see, to realize who you already are, or what you already are, or that which you already are, in the depths of your being. And of course, as a bundle of content, a content in your mind, which for many people is still their identity, and which you also still have, even though you realize the deeper dimension of space, there is still the content of your mind. It doesn't become totally eradicated all at once.

It's the, the content of your mind is still there. But it's recognized as content. So it doesn't absorb your sense of self into it.

Then the content of your mind becomes heavy and problematic. Without having your sense of self in it, the content of your mind is just the content of your mind. And on the level of content, your life is always, will have loose ends, will have things that go well here, and something you gain here, but something else you lose there.

There's always the coming and going of things. There's never a final happy ending on the level of content. It can't be, because things continuously come and go.

So to look for some kind of working out of your life on the level of content is futile. All you can do, the best you can do, is to do your best to play with it. Yes, honor it, because that also has, it is, and it is to be honored for what it is.

Things are to be honored for what they are, and things in the wider sense, but starting with objects, they also can be honored for what they are. And every object has beingness, has certain presence. When you truly give it attention, then you can notice that it has being also.

And it's, you honor that, but that's the object without seeking yourself in it. You become obsessed with objects when you seek self in objects, then you become obsessed with possessions and whatever the objects might enhance your sense of self. So to honor the world of object consciousness, even to honor your emotions, of course, also to see them for what they are, an energy movement, not a personal me problem, my human emotion, nothing personal, an emotion.

And if you, that's fine. And then you see it, and there's space around it. But you're not looking for some kind of ultimate perfection, working out, or some limitless state in the world of objects.

Some, I'm looking for the ideal place to live, the ideal climate, the ideal partner, and job, and car, and my ideal status in the world, so that everybody recognizes how great I am. Ideal, maybe like, yes, arrange the world of things in such a way that it's completely satisfying to me, and fulfills me, and makes me happy. It doesn't work.

You can honor it, yes, but not to seek that which it can't, can never give you, and see that you already are completely and fully yourself, without needing to add anything. You can add, it's a game, no more. You learn a new language, it's a game.

Are you going to have a greater sense of self through it? No, just maybe a greater ego, if you identify with acquired knowledge. Now you speak three languages, whereas he only speaks one language.

You can add, and that gives you the ego a little boost, a satisfaction. Now I've mastered,

mastered another language. I've mastered this, and mastered that, and it doesn't satisfy for long.

And so, as you teach, you're also not trying to sort out somebody else's life on the level of objects, on the level of things. I'm going to sort out your life. Then you, then this is, especially as you begin to teach formally, more formally, when you say, okay, somebody comes to you for a session, or you give a talk, rather than teaching informally, without any structure, just meeting someone.

That's how I taught for years, meeting people on park benches, in little cafes. And then, that's, I didn't know it was called teaching, so it wasn't really teaching, until somebody unfortunately said, you are a spiritual teacher. And somebody else said, who are you?

I said, I don't know. It's just, it's good to know, not to know who you are, because whatever you know is an object in your consciousness. So as you meet people, more formally, teaching, that very structure can become a hindrance, because the structure is already a limitation to it.

That applies to every structure. And that limitation then can be inside you also. Because then there comes the feeling, okay, I need to teach.

And you notice something strange inside you. There are two things to be aware of that are dangerous. One is the feeling that I'm not ready to teach.

I don't know enough. I'm not quite there yet. I'm not ready to teach.

Not yet. I'm not ready to see people. Not yet.

Not quite. That's one danger. The other one, the other danger, is to feel, I'm finally ready to teach.

And then you could become like, sometimes those people want meats. And don't feel offended if you did it once or twice. People want meats, and so you meet someone, and they say, oh, there's obviously something wrong with you, because by the way you walk and hold your body, there's a lot of obstruction there, I can see.

Let me just sit down here. I'll touch, I'll manipulate your spine, or do whatever they do, or I'm a healer, just sit. Or somebody who wants to give things, now they have found the truth, and they are so enthusiastic, now they want to tell it to you.

That's how it, there's only the present moment. Why don't you believe that? And then you might teach, you get into arguments when you teach.

You're completely wrong. Let me tell you how it is. So it's dangerous to feel that you are ready to teach.

It's the ego, hidden, very often. And the other polarity, I'm not ready, is also the ego, hidden underneath. And so the truth of it is, of course, in a deeper sense, you're not ready, nor do you need to be ready.

Because when you say, I'm not ready, you're really referring to the content of your mind. You're still identifying with the content of your mind, and you say, this content is not quite enough yet. I need just a few more workshops, maybe we'll do it.

There's something still that I haven't quite understood, and it's called the secret of the universe. I'm still working on it. But when I have that, then I will start teaching.

So the truth is, you're never really ready to teach, nor do you need to be ready to teach, because you are not teaching. It's not you. Not you as the accumulated content of your mind is teaching.

Space. Space is already in you. Nothing needs to be added to it.

Space is already the essence of who you are. Spaciousness, stillness, whatever pointer works best for you. Pure consciousness, a little bit more abstract pointer.

Dangerous. The more abstract they get, the more dangerous they are, because you can then start to believe in pure consciousness. Space is a little bit better.

I can't do very much with that. And even better is the Buddhists' emptiness. Can't do anything with that.

And that is already fully in you. You don't need, it's, all you need is to recognize that it's already there. How do I recognize?

Surely I need time to realize myself as emptiness. No, time is the one thing that stops you from realizing yourself as emptiness. That's all.

The one thing that you thought you needed is the one thing that stops you. And so comes the beauty of renouncing. There's a lot of talk about renunciation in spiritual circles, and usually that you renounce possessions, you renounce food or certain kinds of food, you renounce sex, you renounce status, although there's a lot of status in being a renunciate, at least in some parts of the world, maybe not in New York.

But if you go to India, you can see how much status you have if you just dress in yellow robes or nothing at all, and don't shave anymore. And immediately you have high status. Not in the West, of course, you have to do something else for status.

But you have a very high status in India, because there's an ancient tradition of honoring and respecting the spiritual. And there are many imposters, there are many jewels in India too, true beings. And there are many who make a living out of playing the role of renunciate, and they get their food, that's how it works.

So renunciation, there are many kinds, but the ultimate renunciation is, one could say, you renounce time. And so then future loses a lot of its importance, because you're not looking for yourself anymore in there, in that dimension for future. Then there's immediately an opening into space when you renounce time.

One could also say, and that's just another way of putting it, they go together, they're one. And don't be afraid when I say it, renounce thought. Because by renouncing, they're one, because time is no more than a thought form.

Past and future is what time is, and past and future are thought forms. Nobody has ever met past and future except as a thought form. A memory, you remember, but you read the now to remember it, a mental projection of something's going to happen, but only can project it now.

So they're thought forms. So thought itself and time are really one. To renounce thought is to realize how deep you are beyond thought, how spacious, how still.

And that's all that's required to be an effective teacher, to use a very limiting term, is that. And it is good to feel that you are not ready. But need to add a little bit more here.

It is good to feel that you are not ready, and then that becomes great power, but you need, I haven't added the little bit here, to feel that you are not ready, and become comfortable with that. Completely accept your non-readiness. And you're not knowing the answers.

In fact, the more you go into not knowing, the deeper the space that opens up, and that's only language that's already deep. The more you go into not knowing, the deeper you become. Well, you're already deep, but...

And so it's, there is such beauty in then meeting another human being, let's say in a more formal teaching situation, you're supposed to give a talk. What are you going to talk about? Well, I have my agenda here.

Point, seven points towards this or that. Fourteen steps to full enlightenment. We'll get through that this weekend.

But with no, then of course it's all object consciousness. You're feeding, and people will sometimes find it satisfying, because you fed them all through the weekend, information and things to remember and feel good about, and sometimes they even get a folder to take home, full of things. It's really been a great weekend.

So there are many people who teach like that, and they do, on their own level, whoever comes to them is drawn to, is right for them at that time. And so there are people who, there are people who teach you, they may teach you theoretical Buddhism, and that may have its place. You may not be ready for more than theoretical Buddhism.

Maybe you haven't suffered enough. All I'm ready for is theology. Give me the theory.

Something to believe in, to identify with. I'm a Buddhist. What about you?

I'm a Christian. Well, you got it all wrong. Or maybe not quite as obvious.

You say, well, we Buddhists respect all traditions. You also have the truth in your own way, and one day you will become a Buddhist also. The beauty there is in not knowing.

In formal teaching situations, and become comfortable with it. Like a little child. Become comfortable with not knowing what's going to be said next, instead of preparing what you think you should be saying next.

Or looking through the archives in your mind for some kind of relevant thing to say to this person, to help them, make them feel better, to teach the truth. And instead, be there as space. And space doesn't know anything.

And then see what happens. There may not even be any words. But that state of not knowing is already a state of powerful, a field, one could say, of intelligence.

Very still. We think intelligence is mental noise. And the better you are at mental noise, the more intelligent you are.

But that's a very limited view. True and deep, the true intelligence is very still. And every creative insight comes out of stillness.

Whoever is creative in any field must at least occasionally become still. Because nothing creative could ever come otherwise. And there are people who are considered great in this world, who are perhaps still 3% of the time.

And that's enough for great insights to come. But here we are, this is, we are going beyond 3% here. So to feel that you are not ready, you don't know the answers, is beautiful.

It becomes power, spiritual power, when you no longer feel uncomfortable about not feeling ready. No longer feel uncomfortable about not knowing. Then comes great wisdom.

And you find yourself speaking, if it's a formal situation, and saying things that you didn't know before. Who is speaking? Stillness is speaking.

Consciousness is speaking. I'm not speaking. And yet I am that.

The tonight, tomorrow, which is a thought form, the time here, see if you can go into this creation to renounce time, to renounce future, to burn up time, one could almost say, burn up past and future, and just be here as spacious awareness, as presence. Yes,

occasionally time will come in, a wave of time will come in, which is a wave of mind. And then it'll be gone.

And before the next wave comes, you notice space. And maybe the next wave will wait a little. And even while the wave is there, you might notice suddenly a little bit of space around it.

And the wave could come as an emotion from within. It could come as anxious, something anxious about what's going to happen to me. And you notice the emotion.

And let it be. Accept the is-ness of this moment, within and without. And suddenly there's a little bit of space around the anxiety.

Because you let it be. You allow it to be. Even our anger about some insignificant thing here that isn't right, something's not quite right, how it should be.

There, there's this little stain on the carpet. I didn't come here for that. Maybe a slight exaggeration, but not only a slight exaggeration, how sometimes the mind operates in order to draw you in again and to feel right and righteous and give you a sense of self again.

Me against that. With all the things that have happened to me, that life has done to me, surely I need 15 years of psychoanalysis just to, well, just to see what's there. Just whatever movement is there, it'll be some kind of content.

Some kind of content, some kind of form, emotional form, thought form. And simply to see it and allow it to be. Because the fastest way to space consciousness is to allow the forms that you encounter in the now, nowhere else, to be as they are.

So the fastest way to the limitless and formless essence of who you are is not to fight the forms. To fight the forms keeps you trapped yourself in form. Because every reactivity, every reaction against any form that arises in your life, within or without, strengthens your own form as the me.

That's why the ego loves that fighting movement, that reacting movement, that righteous reactivity, that shouldn't, should, he shouldn't, they shouldn't. And so to allow the forms, especially now as we practice intensely here, wherever you go, the forms in your life will have certain limitations. So your room may have certain limitations, the food may have certain limitations, how you feel inside you may have certain limitations.

You've come here for inner peace and shouldn't, why can't I feel that? Well, what is it that you do feel? Well, I feel this, this turmoil that's been there, it hasn't left me, it was supposed to go because I'm on a retreat here.

Okay, what, what does it feel like? Well, it's this movement. Okay, what do you do with

it?

I don't know, I should go. Well, is it as it is? Well, of course it is as it is.

Well then, all you have to do is accept that it is as it is. Because it is already, it is, that is. Okay, is it that bad?

Well, no, well, it, but you can't argue with the fact that it is. And then, notice a little bit of space around the turbulence. One, and space for you, I'd also call that a little bit of peace around the non-peace.

Words are limited, we're using words for something that goes beyond the objects. A little bit of peace around the non-peace, because you accepted the non-peace. And it's a little bit at first, and then you may realize that it is vast, that the peace around the non-peace is vast, and that the non-peace is relatively insignificant.

But it wants to be taken very seriously. And this is what you teach, nothing else you teach. Whenever you meet anybody in any teaching situation, that's what you teach, no matter what form the teaching takes, that ultimately, that is the essence.

So here, be with what is completely, simply within or without, just be with that. And so, nothing needs to be different from the way it is right now, because it already is. That takes you beyond the limit, seemingly limiting forms in your life, because that's what form is, the nature of all forms to be limiting.

Every thought limits you, every thought that you think, especially if you identify with it, limits you completely. You're trapped in a tiny little thought form, and you think you're speaking the truth. That's how it is.

And you've seen a tiny perspective, the totality is vast, you've taken a tiny fragment out of the vastness, and that's how it is. Every form is limiting. You meet somebody, you have a relationship, that is limiting in some way, also, always.

And then you don't want any relationships, you live alone, you're very limited there, too. No human interaction anymore, very limiting. You can't do anything without encountering limitation somewhere.

It doesn't mean that you cannot play around in the world of form and find a nice, beautiful mansion to live in, without expecting to find the limitless, which is ultimately yourself, there. Then playing, it's a play. And improve your life on the level of form is beautiful, too, but not expecting something through that, that it can't give you.

So the limitations you find here, the little ones, suddenly it starts raining, you get wet, you feel cold, that feels limiting, you contract. Why did I come here? You have a limiting thought.

You lie in bed and say, I should have, should be at home, would be more comfortable, and have so many things to deal with there. Why did I come here? Whatever you encounter limitation, or you have a, suddenly have a pain in the body as you get up, allowing whatever form this moment takes, to be as it is, takes you beyond form in yourself.

Not fighting the form. Allowing. So the formless is hidden in the form.

People think, I need to get rid of all this to finally find freedom. And you find some other forms, some other limitation. If you're poor now, you might think great wealth will free you, and when you have great wealth, you will find that has its own limitations.

You suddenly are a different kind of prisoner. If you seek something there, on the level of form, yes. And then you've realized forms are to be accepted as they are now, just now, just this.

Not some story in the head about, I'm poor, so I have to accept that I'm poor. No. This moment, you're not poor at this moment.

You're sitting on a chair. You're breathing. There's a little table.

There's a mattress on the floor. And there's a window. And a little potted plant.

That's the reality of this moment. And perhaps the room is small. And there's two, three coins on the table.

That's your capital. And that's the, and perhaps the hungry. That's this moment.

That's how it is at this moment. It's actually quite beautiful. Even that, when it's fully accepted, this moment.

Or you're sitting on a park bench. No room anymore around you. Just this.

Now if you have an idea in your head, this is what my life has come to. I'm ruined. I'm poor.

Look at these bastards in their expensive cars. Stories going around the head. Because every story is a search of an identity.

If you can condemn these bastards in expensive cars, you have added a little bit to your sense of mind-made identity. Because I'm right and they are wrong. That's how the ego works.

No, so it's not accepting I'm ill or accepting that I'm poor or accepting just this moment as it is. Not some idea around this moment. Just this moment.

And then enormous things happen when you don't expect anything to happen anymore.

That's the end of conditioning. It's amazing.

It may be good to keep noble silence for the rest of tonight. Stay just a little while with the empty chair when this form is gone. We'll deal later today, if there is such a thing as later.

There isn't really, but in conventional terms. This afternoon we'll address any questions that may arise. Some may be here already.

Others may be there. In the meantime, we're here. And it's very still here, which is wonderful.

In most places there's always some humming of this or that machine or air conditioner or heating, but here it's still very still. You're already aware of the beautiful spiritual practice of listening to silence when it's there. And in the moment of listening, you will realize that you're not thinking.

Now you may not be able to listen to silence for very long, but in the moment of noticing silence, you're not thinking. That's an amazing thing. And of course, also, since you're not listening to anything, when you listen to silence, silence is nothing, not a form, not a thing.

We talked about things last night, but silence is not a thing. It sounds like a thing when we call it silence, but in itself silence is formless. It is nothingness, one could say.

It's no thingness. So you listen to something that is only a space. And in that, you become aware of that which is formless, which is awareness itself.

Not in a subject-object relationship, but awareness becoming aware of itself. The field of attention, one could say. Another way of putting it, you are becoming aware of yourself as awareness.

I am. The deepest I am-ness underneath the stories. It gets mixed up with the stories.

So I said in a little book that I wrote recently that's coming out in the summer, it's called Stillness Speaks, that if you lose touch with inner stillness, you lose touch with yourself. And when you lose touch with yourself, you lose yourself in the world. You lose yourself in your mind.

You lose yourself in your thoughts, in your emotions, in your perceptions, and in your experiences. Looking for yourself, but not never finding yourself. So that's the world, is all those things.

And you lose yourself in that when you lose touch with inner stillness. And then you're looking for yourself, continuously being lost. This is why in India they call that state delusion.

You're not really lost, but you think you're lost. It's like a dream. And so the challenge is, it's relatively easy here.

There's the helpful silence around you that you can notice. But the challenge is, when you meet the world, which is the world of things, of forms, including your thoughts, we talked about it, including physical things, and all those demands that the world makes upon you, when you meet the world, you walk out of here, and the world arises again. Even if we have a period of silence, you walk out of here, and it's more likely that the world, even if you don't speak, in the form of even if your cell phones are switched off, and there's nobody you can say, you must listen to this, this is what happened.

But the cell phone is switched off, but there are other cell phones in the head, and the thought comes, you must think about this. It's the same. So the world arises as your own thoughts in you.

So the art of living, one could say, is not to shut out the world and say, I don't want anything to do anymore with the world. I've had enough of it. More than enough.

I'm becoming a hermit. I'm going away. I don't want anybody to bother me anymore.

They're all mad. The whole world is mad. Leave me alone.

But even then, you would still carry the whole mad world with you in your head. And your pain body that you identify with that becomes thought. And after a few days or weeks of relative peace, perhaps, if that, the world will arise again inside you, even in the hermit.

And then the doubts come in, which is the world also. Why am I here? So the art is to deal with things, the things of the world, including your thinking and your emotions and your relationships and your experiences, without the loss of that sense of space or spaciousness.

To have the spaciousness while you play with the world. And I'm saying play, because it's when you have the spaciousness, you can play with the world. Not in a flippant sense, not in a play, as a beautiful, you're engaged in a dance or play in the world of form.

Not play in the sense of I'm superior to it or whatever. No, control or anything like that. No, you participate in the play.

It's only, but you can only do that when there is not a complete loss of awareness of space, or awareness of awareness, which is the same space. So the question at any moment in your life is, where's the space at this moment? Am I totally getting drawn into object consciousness, into things, into reactions, into thoughts, into emotions?

So that a vital question at any moment is whether you have lost the space, and you have lost yourself in things in the world. And that's very easy to happen. You all know that, how easy it is, because the world seems to have such an enormous gravitational pull, the things of the world, including the inner world.

And so there are quite a few people who can be very spiritual, which means still inside and present and aware, can be very spiritual when they're not being disturbed. When they're left alone, they're sitting alone in their room. Or out in nature, it's beautiful too, it's very helpful.

And that's good that you have at least there, at least there you can be still, and even the majority of the population don't have that. They can't, even when they're alone in their room, they're tormented continuously by their minds. So they're never, at least you have that, but then at some point you have to come out of your room, or you have to leave nature and go back into the human world.

And there we go again. And then how quickly do you lose all sense of space or spaciousness? How quickly do the things of this world pile up?

And then your inner space is crammed full with things. No sense of space left. So many things to think about and deal with and to react to.

So this, the art then is, one could almost say, to be, to live in two dimensions simultaneously. As long as you are here as a form, a physical form, you are also in the world of form. You cannot prematurely leave that.

And there's a reason why you're here. It's actually through facing the dilemma of finding yourself disguised as a form, consciousness disguised as a form, and then forgetting who you are through that dilemma that you encounter of being here in the world of form. It's only through the dilemma that you go deeper.

So you don't find the dimension of the formless through removing yourself from the world of form. But through the form itself becomes an opening when you are in a right relationship to the forms. So that's the art that everyone here is here to master.

One could say your purpose is to be a bridge between two worlds, the formless world of consciousness and consciousness manifested as form, a bridge between that. And that's the dance. And what, if you lose the dimension of stillness, formless, the world becomes a place of misery, on suffering, sooner or later, with brief episodes of delusion, delusional happiness.

I often cite as a typical example of delusional, brief happiness, the honeymoon experience. But that's only a, one could say, a metaphor for many different kinds of honeymoons when some form comes into your life and seems to suddenly fulfill you for a moment. So that's, at any moment then in your life, especially in relationships, but one

could say you're always in relationship with something or someone.

Even one could say you have a relationship also with your mind, with your thinking and your emotions. So the question is, is spaciousness being obscured at this moment by things? Or is there still a sense of spaciousness while you deal with things, while you speak, while you answer the phone, talk to people that see what needs to be done, give attention to this person, to that person, or to this matter that needs dealing with, or driving, or waiting for this or that.

And even while your mind produces thoughts, are you completely lost in the thoughts? Or is there still in the background a certain stillness, a certain sense of space? And that is there when you, you're aware of the kind of thoughts that go through your head and you're not totally absorbed by each thought, then there is space.

You no longer totally believe in each thought. That means there is space beyond the thought in you. It's those people who totally believe in each thought that comes into their head, they're lost in the world, lost in thought.

And then you act on that, on a partial and extremely relative truth that this thought expresses, a tiny perspective, and then you take action. And you can, what that leads to, you don't see that this thought is only a relative truth. The action arises out of a relative viewpoint.

And of course, it brings more suffering. It's not the totality acting through you, because sometimes action is required. But true action doesn't come out of this mental decision making, comes out of becoming still, finding the space, being the space.

And then action comes, or the right word comes out of that, unpremeditated. Sure. Another way, because it's good to give you a choice of pointers, a choice to apply in your life.

Another way of asking yourself that question, whether there is still space in you, in any situation, at any moment. You could ask, where is the now? Because the now is space, the space in which things happen.

Now is not what happens. It is the space in which whatever happens, happens. So the now is just another perspective on it.

So if you become aware of the field of now, that's called present moment awareness, one could say, aware of awareness again, of the field of now, then that's the space. There's the space. And there's then what happens.

Then what happens becomes, you can, when you have mastered the art of living in the two dimensions, then you realize the primordial dimension is the dimension of space, of being, because that is the source. Or whatever happens comes out of that and goes back

into that. And so whatever then happens on the level of events and happenings is always of secondary importance.

That is called liberation from the world. Free. That is what Jesus referred to when he said, I have overcome the world.

Who was he to say, I have overcome the world? He didn't have worldly power, armies to command, bank accounts, nothing, and said, I have overcome the world. So he was talking, of course, about this, to realize then that whatever happens on that level of form is secondary in importance.

It is relatively important, perhaps, healthy, sick, rich, poor, gain, loss, relatively important, happy, unhappy, just got something, just lost something, relatively important, but none of that is absolutely important. When the relative masquerades as absolute, then life gets heavy and serious. And so it's only when you recognize the relative as relative, then really, one could say it is the end of suffering, because in the truest meaning of the word, suffering is mistaking the relative for the absolute.

It doesn't mean that you cannot experience physical pain anymore, or certain things may happen on the level of form, which are part of the level of form. On the level of forms, occasionally, things collapse. Occasionally, things dissolve.

It is in the nature of form that occasionally it crumbles. All forms, whether it be situations, or material structures, or relationships, whatever on the level of form, or some philosophy you arranged in your mind that explains it all, as they do, people who believe in dogmas do, and so you've rearranged. And at some point, something will happen, and even that will crumble.

Many people, you may remember, may have read when the communist regime in East Germany collapsed, and the collective belief in dogma collapsed, and that was a country where every, I think every fifth person was a government informer. They had buildings full of piles and piles of information on people. Later, it was open to public access, and people were amazed.

They had information about everybody. What for? Mad.

You can't explore madness any further. You can only say it's mad. And many people, there was a very high rate of suicides when it collapsed, because the philosophies that they had arranged, the way in which the universe, the world, they explained it to themselves, didn't make sense anymore.

And because they were lost in the relative, all what was left was to kill themselves. Life didn't make sense anymore. Completely lost in mind, in the relative.

They say in Japan sometimes, maybe less so now, when people lost their jobs, because a

job was a lifelong identification with your company, they would often commit suicide. Again, being lost in the relative. When the stock market crashed in the 30s, maybe it still happens now.

The famous visual image that we still have is people jumping off skyscrapers, because their life didn't, was empty now. Their stocks reduced to nothing. What's left?

Nothing. Nothing left. Nothing left.

So there, there's the fine, the beautiful balance. So ask yourself then, where's the space? Or where's the now, whatever pointer?

And that can awaken, that little pointer, that pointer is not it, but that pointer points to the, it can awaken you. Even if you have to have a little external sign for a little while, don't get attached to it. On your door, as you go out or come on your office door, desk, where's the now?

Or something like that. But don't use it for too long. It's always good after a while to discard pointers, because they can become little deities.

And the moment people start building the church of now, you know that they've lost the now. So there's the walking. And that's, this is really the purpose of being, is to learn that.

And then the beautiful liberation is that whatever happens in your life is secondary. Relatively important, perhaps, but never absolutely important. And that includes what doesn't happen either.

It includes not winning the lottery, or winning the lottery, or making it in the eyes of the world, which is a meaningless thing anyway, but it's how people think. Making it in the eyes of the world, or not making it in the eyes of the world. Just little stories that people tell.

When you finally make it, you realize it, it's not a big thing. Making it is quite meaningless. It's a fiction too.

So whatever happens, or doesn't happen, may be important, but not absolutely so. To know that, not as an intellectual belief, but to know that, to know that within yourself, within the very cell structure of your body, to know that. To dwell in space consciousness, to be that.

To derive your identity from that, which is so different from the egoic identity that the Buddha called it no self. So that you don't confuse it with something that is not like that at all. That deepest I, or I am, that has nothing to do with form, and nothing to do with time, is confused with identification with I am Mr. So-and-so. I am the accountant, the

managing director, the street sweeper. I'm the mother, the father. I am the one who made it, the one who failed, the one who made it, whatever.

All these form identifications. The greatest illusion lies in the most frequently used word in the language, I. That word contains the greatest illusion and potentially the deepest truth.

Usually when it's used, it refers to the greatest illusion of I. And that's what the Buddha referred to when he talked of the illusion of self. A fiction in the mind, a story.

Identification with forms, with things, with thoughts, with emotions, a bundle of thoughts. That's me, my past, my future. So the most frequently used word in the language, I, is the core delusion.

But that potentially, that word, I, also speaks of the deepest truth of who you are when there is, that is the I prior to identification with forms. I am not this or that. The deepest sense of beingness or presence that is the space, that is the inner stillness.

And to have that even as you speak, to let, in the background, so to speak, it's there, as you answer the phone, saying, this check didn't clear, you wrote a check, and there must, something must have happened, the bank, I got it returned, now whatever I was going to do, I have to pay my credit. Oh, okay. Well, let's see what we can do.

Always have a little, bring in, helps to, little gaps. Let's see what we can do. We could do this.

I could call the bank manager, or maybe I could write you another check. So action arises, but there's space around it. Thoughts arise, but there's space around the thoughts.

Not, but the, the world, especially in the form of the human mind, has this pull, it provokes you, it wants you to interact with it on its own vibrational frequency. It doesn't want you to interact, but it doesn't want the space, it wants you to be equally nervous and agitated. So the person who is speaking to you, because that person is not, is lost in the world, is lost in the mind, so there isn't really anybody there, there's just the frequency of the human mind, and the frequency of the human mind wants you to, what's the word, interact on it on its own level.

It wants you to even feed it, to contribute to that frequency, come, so it wants you to be nervous also, to be agitated and upset. Now the, the person who is talking to you doesn't know that, because it's all unconscious, there's nobody really there, there's only the, the mind stream there, and the mind stream says, come on, give me more of this, this is so important, surely you must agree that we should all be very anxious about this. It's not saying that, but it's implied.

So then it loves when you can, you can react on the same level, then it increases, it gets even stronger, then if you can draw in other people, that's even better, make another phone call, you know what happened? Oh no! And, and then you can get on the emails.

And if you happen to be powerful, if you have worldly power, you could go to such an extreme as that you pick up the phone and say, send in the army. And they don't realize there's no space left whatsoever, there's just that. And that is the same, this art, the two dimensions, living in the two dimensions, it applies also when you, of course, when you, many of you work with people, some of you are doctors, nurses, body workers, social workers, quite some of you are teachers, you work with people, and there's a form in which you work with people, there's a modality of working, whatever is the existing, the pre-existing modality of what you do. And so the question is, does the modality or the structure tend to obscure space consciousness?

Does it tend to obscure presence? Or can it, is it a vehicle for presence? Can presence and that sense of spaciousness flow into the modality?

Or does, is there a tendency for the modality to obscure space, for the modality to be totally mind-dominated? And if it is, then the question arises, is there any way that this modality that I use and I work with, is there any way that this modality can make room, is there room in it for space? So for example, if you are a body worker, then there is great room for space, because mental concepts don't come in very much, and words don't come in very much.

So easily, that sense of spaciousness, of stillness, can flow into your movements, the touch, and so on, works beautifully. However, if you are a doctor, there are certain requirements on the level of form that have to be met. Doctors need to take notes.

They listen and they take notes. And here we have, that is the world of form and of thought. So is it possible for you not to become totally drawn into that?

Not saying you can't take, you have to take notes, yes. Is it possible to take notes with space? Is it possible to, while you are not scribbling something, to listen to that person in spaciousness, spacious, still awareness?

Then step from the stillness into, back into thought and write something down. Then step out of thought again, as, and look at the past. So you step in and out of thought, and after a while you notice even while there is thought, there is still a spaciousness in the background, or around it.

So words are always limited. So you can see, and I know some doctors are already mastering that. Some still have difficulty with it, of getting drawn into that.

And perhaps this afternoon, some of you may want to say something about it, how it is for you. You may be a psychoanalyst. Probably not, but...

Now the typical picture that we have of psychoanalysts is they sit a little bit behind you, the patient lies on the couch, they still do it. And there's something good there too, but they still do it. But they're writing continuously, whatever the person, the, all the content of the mind that comes up, they write it all down.

And so they have glasses and... And then what happens? And then what, and then they speak, they speak, they speak, the content of your mind, repressed content comes up, and the psychoanalyst fills volumes and volumes of scribbles with...

And then it can happen after 10 or 15 or 20 years of scribbling, as the psychoanalyst finds that for longer periods he's not scribbling, he's just listening, and he scribbles a little less, and may not know quite what's happening. And it could, can happen that in people who work with people, the spaciousness arises without them even ever having heard about it. It arises naturally, it happens to some.

So after a while, they become much more effective in what they do, because they have gone beyond the form, beyond the mind structures that are associated with whatever they do, and something that is deeper than mind comes in, even though they may to some extent still be using certain structures. That's beautiful when that happens. But you don't have to wait for 20 or 30 years for it to happen naturally, which perhaps it would, to see whether it is possible to bring presence into this very, the structures that you have to use.

And if you're a teacher, there are certain structures there that are of course created by the mind, and they're not created by the mind that is in touch with spaciousness. Most of the structures of the world, if you go into companies and institutions, government institutions, corporations, in most cases, there are a few enlightened companies, but in most cases, the structure is entirely the product of thought, of mind. It doesn't allow for space at all.

So that is why when you go into certain corporations, many, many, it doesn't feel so good. There's a, everybody's fighting against everybody else. And their little power groups here, they, us against them, and even within the little groups there, it's a, it's a nightmare world.

And yet, even there, the question is, is it possible to bring space? And of course, in most cases, it is. Schools, many schools are very agitated and nervous places.

There are some alternative schools that may be different. And again, is it possible for you to use, of course, the demands being made upon you as a teacher, that they have to learn this, they have to pass an exam, you have to evaluate and judge them, each one, and perhaps what really matters, the system, the structure has no place to evaluate whether a student has an inner stillness or not. You can, when you write the reports, the end of term reports, there's no section that speaks of inner stillness at all.

So, again, in many cases, the world can actually probably change from within those structures if more people bring in spaciousness or presence. And it is a challenge, especially heavy, mind-dominated structures can be a big challenge, but it can be done. And if it cannot be done, you will find yourself being removed from where you are.

That's beautiful, too. You will find yourself, either you suddenly, one morning you get a letter that says, we do not require your services anymore, or you yourself write the letter. So bringing in, into whatever you do, bringing in, bringing the space as the most essential factor in what you do, not the external structure that needs to be honored, also.

But it is not the most essential factor. It's never the most essential factor. So there's always, and the space is a, is greater than you.

It is, in essence, it is you, but it is greater than the little, far greater than what the little me could do. All healing arises from that. All true transformation arises out of that.

And it's very rare for human beings, for people who work with others, to have no structure whatsoever. So that's, of course, it's beautiful when it happens. This is how typically in India, spiritual teaching happens in many cases, that there is an almost complete absence of firm structure.

In other words, the teacher doesn't, well, some teachers have techniques, but the true teachers, they just sit there. And you come to them, and if you're lucky, they're there. If you're not lucky, they've gone.

They've gone somewhere, nobody knows when they're coming back. And they just sit, and there's nothing, all that there is, is presence, beingness, spaciousness. And that's the most powerful thing.

It transmits itself. And there may come a time for you too, there may come a time, there doesn't have to be, when all structures fall away, the ways in which you interact with people. And then people ask you, can I come and see you for a session?

And you say, okay. And they ask, well, what do you do in a session? I don't know.

Just come and see. I don't know what I do. I don't do anything.

And it's not just a clever answer. You truly don't know what you do, because you don't do anything as such. Just that.

Or you continue to use whatever form it is, and presence flows into it beautifully. It becomes a vehicle for that spaciousness. In other words, this stillness becomes an essential part of even the form.

A typical example of that would be the simple thing of a simple movement that you

make. Picking up a flower, putting it in a vase, without any interference of thought, just that. And without saying, okay, now this flower has to go to that particular place there.

It goes where it needs to go by itself. It knows where it fits in relation to the totality. So there's an intelligence then that comes into play that is far greater than, and that can, so this is just a little example how presence, spaciousness, whatever you're aware of, flows into, can flow into the doing, into a movement, as every artist knows.

But it's not confined to art. It can flow into every step that you walk. Drinking.

A certain quality then comes into what you do that is absent when there is no spaciousness in the doing. If there is spaciousness as you do, and the quality, it's hard to explain what I mean by quality, but I believe that you know, you can sense what is meant by that word, quality, that flows into what you do out of spaciousness. There is presence in the doing, which means the future is not more important than this moment.

When the mind is there and spaciousness is lost, the next moment is always more important than this one. That's always how the mind, because it needs to get to the end of it already, because then there's the next thing to do. And that means when people come to you, you don't want the next moment, which is, I want them to get better.

I want them to awaken. I want them to be happy again. That is also an obstacle and a hindrance, because that prevents you from being fully there in presence, in spacious presence with them.

Because you, yes, you have good intentions, but those good intentions prevent the deeper intelligence that dwells in the presence, that is the presence, that is the primordial intelligence, from coming into that situation and resolving it from within, rather than somebody coming in from the outside saying, I'm going to rearrange that situation to make you better. It's a very natural thing to feel that you want to help someone. But if it becomes a wanting something that is not here now, wanting something to be different, instead of a deep acceptance of what is, that's where the deepest, the true healing comes in through that.

Because the mind will tell you, I can't accept that this person is so miserable. I can't accept that this person is suffering so much. No, of course, on the human level, you can't, perhaps.

You go beyond that, and it is the deepest surrender to this moment as it is. And that's where a power comes in that you could never, the mind, totally beyond what the mind could ever devise systems or techniques for this or that. It comes from within.

And so that you are the provider of that space. It comes through you and you are not separate from the space. We have to use language, unfortunately.

So not even, not wanting this moment to be different from the way it is. And then the deepest and true change happens. It's almost a paradox.

In the deepest acceptance, it happens. Because if you don't, then you're saying in some way that the universe is perverse. It doesn't, it shouldn't have done that to you.

But it is as it is. Always. And the totality of the universe has brought it about.

The totality. And we cannot understand through the mind why an event that seems senseless, that has happened to somebody, to make a person say, why does that happen to me? Or why does it happen to this person?

It doesn't make sense. This person had a whole life ahead of them and now they've fallen ill and they might die prematurely, or so the mind says. This shouldn't be happening.

Or even the worst is a child falling ill. It's the most difficult to accept if a child dies. It seems that it's against the entire law of the universe that life should be taken away from somebody who has hardly started to live.

So it seems so natural that when you meet, let's say a child who is very sick comes to you, that you feel this shouldn't be happening. And you really want that child to get better. But nobody, the human mind cannot understand why certain things happen within the totality.

But it can understand, especially now since of modern physics, the human mind can understand that there are no isolated events. Everything is connected with everything else. It's only through our superficial sense perceptions that we isolate something and say this is an event.

But an event is part of the totality of the cosmos. And it's probably connected even to things in other galaxies. It's so one.

The entire universe is one organism, one being. And everything there is interconnected. So there are no separate or isolated events.

But we cannot possibly understand through the human mind what function a seemingly senseless event has within the totality. And that includes the worst things that humans have done to other humans, created hell on the planet, the worst things, concentration camps, world wars, people building chemical weapons, chemical and other devilish things that even in your wildest dreams you couldn't even think of. And they make them to inflict suffering on other humans.

It all seems, and then, why? And even that within the totality has a function. But we cannot understand because all we see is a fragment.

If you had a huge painting and you took a tiny fragment out of it, just a little pigment, it would, you would say what's, that doesn't make sense. I just, what is this? It's only when you, if you could see the totality, you can see that's where it fits in.

It's one, sometimes one can get a glimpse of that, just a glimpse of it, when you see a seemingly negative event, a seemingly something that shouldn't be happening. At this time you have this crisis, Iraq and so on. In the 60s you had Vietnam.

Let's look at that just for a moment, just a glimpse. On the one hand you have a, this war which was later recognized, even by the people in power, as probably a mistake. As Robert McNamara, the then defense secretary, wrote in his autobiography, probably a mistake.

Unfortunately 50,000 young Americans died in it and many more Vietnamese. Probably a mistake, great suffering inflicted, yes. And it's, but at the same time, there was an enormous awakening on the planet, especially coming from America and the West Coast, a spiritual awakening, a great movement of spiritual awakening.

And somehow that seemingly negative event cannot completely be separated from the awakening, because the awakening was seeing the madness of the collective human mind. The seeing of the madness of the collective human mind was actually part of the awakening of many thousands and thousands and hundreds of thousands of people, disidentifying from collective forms that they until then had become completely identified with, the collective structures stepping out of that. And so the seemingly negative and the awakenings, and I'm not explaining it away, just saying there's a, you can get a little glimpse of to see how sometimes that fits.

And for humans to see what they have done in the 20th century, what they, what humanity has done out of the madness, which is the madness of being lost in, in things, in the world of mind, in the world of form, totally identified with forms, the egoic, collective egoic mind, and then what it does. This moment is as it is because it cannot be otherwise. That's all we know.

And the more deeply we know this, the more even the world of form of things changes. And this is, we now come to something we've been speaking about, living in the two dimensions. But when humans or when a human being lives in the two dimensions, the form, the world of things, and the formless, stillness, spaciousness, that stillness does something also to the way in which you experience the world of form.

It's something flows into the world of form that does not remove certain polarities that are always inherent in the world of form, and yet makes the world of form a more benign, softer place. With polarity still there, yes, forms do still dissolve and crumble here and there, but without the harshness and the incredible suffering that is there when the deeper dimension is absent in a human's life. So that's where the world becomes a

more benevolent place, which it already is.

It's the human mind that creates hell. The planet itself is a beautiful a jewel of unspeakable beauty. And humans are poisoning it and destroying it and madness.

It is what is. You see it. The more humans see the madness of it, the more change comes.

And that's happening. Wow. It's mad.

It's mad. And you can't fight madness. You become mad yourself.

And this is an interesting truth. If you fight madness, you become mad. You get drawn into the madness.

If you fight unconsciousness, you have to, you will be drawn into unconsciousness. So just to see it is enough. You can point it out, yes.

You can write your newspapers about it without the fighting spirit behind it, because then you personalize unconsciousness. You make an identity out of it, and you call certain people or groups bad. They may be bad because they're doing dreadful things to the planet, but that's not their identity.

They embody human unconsciousness. So here also, surrender and acceptance of what is to see the madness is a very powerful thing. Wow.

So the beauty is, as you bring space consciousness into the world of form, the world of form becomes a more benign place. You encounter more love, because what we call love, what we call joy, or what we call compassion, compassion only flows out of the space, not out of the movement of thought. Love is not produced by the movement of thought, and not by the movement of emotion either, because the emotional love is, I want you, and then I hate you, and I want you.

It's deeper even than emotion. And so love, joy, compassion come out of space. They are inseparable from that inner spaciousness.

And so then, yes, a world is possible, not a world that is totally free of polarities, because there would be no world anymore. The entire universe would implode, and all that would be left would be the one, God, the unmanifested, one left. All polarities are gone.

No high and low anymore, no good and bad anymore. But as long as the world is there, the polarities are there, and that also is accepted. When you accept the polarities, they are actually quite beautiful too.

You accept loss when loss comes, you accept gain when gain comes, you accept the bad weather when the bad weather comes, and then the bad weather isn't bad weather

anymore. It's only called bad weather because so many humans didn't accept it. So they called it bad when it rains.

They called it bad weather. But there's nothing bad about rain. In fact, if last night you listen to it, you can see how beautiful it is.

Well, the mind say, okay, it was beautiful because I was in bed. But it wouldn't have been beautiful if I'd been stuck outside and getting drenched. Well, you have to try it.

Be outside and get drenched and don't call it bad. A friend of mine did that years ago. I wasn't a teacher then.

I was still just talking to people at university. We hadn't been talking about the weather, but one day he came one morning and said, you know, we're talking about yesterday, acceptance and so on. He said, this morning I was on my bike, got totally drenched in the rain.

And he said, and you know what? I became a duck. And it was great.

He felt he was a duck. Now, that may not have been a totally accurate image because ducks don't actually get wet, but it doesn't matter. It worked for him because for him being a duck meant not resisting, feeling wet, just feel wet.

Normally calling it good or bad, it is as it is at this moment. It doesn't, you don't change it by calling it bad. And you, of course, you do what you have to do.

You might seek shelter or you might go home and take off your wet clothes. And there's a beauty in all that. There's a beauty in many, many things that the mind would have called bad in its habitual state of resistance.

There are so many things that are habitually called bad. If you drop something, it breaks, you call it, oh. And that's an habitual movement.

And then an amazing thing happens when these things, and you become so present that you drop something and you just look. And there is a beauty even in that broken cup. There's a beauty in that when the mind doesn't call it anything because that's where the world of form goes.

All forms eventually, one way or another, have to go that way. So why say this shouldn't have happened? At least not yet.

I wanted to enjoy this cup another 20 years. Who knows? Your body may be gone in a year.

So the, yes, the polarities are there, but then they become actually quite pleasant polarities. They're actually to be enjoyed. You don't hang on to one polarity.

So this is what I want and that's what I don't want. So this is perhaps the arising of getting lost in thought, getting lost in mind, that was what in the Bible is described, of course, as eating of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Like, dislike, good, bad.

And then this became the state of humanity. At first it was a great thing. They could do things that animals couldn't do.

And then thousands and thousands and thousands of years passed and then they got taken over by that thing in the head and lost space, beingness, source. And then it's the destiny of humans to find it again and then find it at a deeper level than when they lost it. It always happens when you find something, there's a deeper dimension than when you've had it, you didn't even know you had it.

Then perhaps this is what in the Old Testament, in the book of Genesis is hinted at when we read of the, there's not only in this garden, there's the book of the, there's the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. There's another tree that is mentioned briefly, and that's the tree of life. And so, I don't think God ever said they mustn't eat of the tree of life, but that's what it says there.

There is the tree of life also available for humans. And so perhaps the next step is to eat of the tree of life. And perhaps this event is part of that.

One could say that the inner body is the doorway into spaciousness. So to feel that, that the life within the body, to feel that is the opening into spaciousness, because it is ultimately, or the body is form, and even the invisible energy, that which animates the body, is also form, not as clearly defined as a physical form, but more fluid form. And then you go into that, and then it merges with the, into the form, as we're using words for something that cannot be described through words.

But it's enough to say that it's very helpful if you don't want to be drawn continuously into object consciousness, things, to feel the inner body, the aliveness, as the anchor for presence, and as the doorway. So when the world comes at you, or the mind comes at you, either from within as your own mind, or from without as somebody else's mind, it's the same human mind, or even the collective mind, you're watching the news on television, staying connected with the inner body. And then you're meeting the world through stillness. And then that has an effect even on that which you perceive, anything that you perceive, that you meet through any situation, even the world situation, watching the news through stillness.

And the news is designed to agitate you, to everybody there's having a good time, having a bad time. A question here on the world situation, as is sometimes asked. It seems that the momentum of insanity is growing stronger in the world these days.

Any pointers to help us be intensely alert and present as the insanity grows and grows?

As you notice, the answer is already in the question. And then whatever you do on the external level can come out of that.

It doesn't mean necessarily that you're inactive. You may take part in a demonstration in stillness, or you may go and join the war in stillness. Well, it's unlikely that that would come out of stillness, but who knows.

It has to be like that, a simultaneous movement of the old consciousness, totally identified with form, with ego, collective egos, personalized egos. That has to run its course, and it has to get more and more mad. That's its natural course.

And so on the surface, there seems to be a deterioration. And at the same time, there's also an acceleration of the arising presence of new consciousness, which you don't always or very rarely see on the television, very rarely. But it's there.

You can get little hints of it if you look carefully. For example, you may have seen the past weeks or months, the power of now got into famous bestseller lists. And in some publications, they only divide books into fiction and nonfiction.

And in those, a few times, I saw together the power of now and another title that is popular at the moment, Bush at War. And they were at one week, it was one was ahead. It seems a safe prediction, however, to say that in one or two years time, Bush at War probably won't be available anymore in the bookstores, because those books tend to disappear quickly.

They're no longer current. Some historians may still look at them. And the power of now will be around for as long as it's needed.

And then it will disappear. And that's good. So just one or two little hints before we look at some questions.

First, whenever you interact with the world, notice when you're being dragged along by a mindstream. Notice how some other mindstream, which is ultimately all one mindstream, wants to drag you along and how very quickly your own mind links into that mindstream and drags you along and you're in it. Even a simple conversation, it doesn't have to be a heated argument.

If you're alert, even in a simple conversation, you can notice how you get into the mindstream and there's no gap anymore, no space. And expressing your viewpoint, opinion, nothing seems quite harmless. It is harmless in itself, but you're lost in mind and very easily it can turn into conflict and often does.

So to notice being lost in a mindstream, in a simple conversation, so that you bring gaps, space, even into a simple conversation. And that is when you have uttered a statement, come to the end of it, let go of the statement, step out of the mindstream, into step, one

step back into no mind, step back, and there's a moment of no thought, just presence. You've said what you had to say and step back.

And the other, it doesn't need to be long, the other person may not even know that, may not even notice it, doesn't have to be a noticeable, could just be two seconds, three seconds, stepping, always stepping back. And then you make another statement, perhaps, stepping back. It's always stepping so that you don't get dragged along.

So there's continuous spaciousness opening up within the conversation, within the interaction. There are spaces, little spaces. And then as you become familiar with space, so to speak, how could you not be familiar?

It's the essence of who you are. As you become familiar with space, then after a while you will notice, even as you speak, you are not totally in the grip of that which is being said. It is being said, but it doesn't, it does not absorb the whole of you.

It does not absorb your entire consciousness, those statements. There's consciousness and that, and that initially it helps just to feel the body, even as you speak, the inner body, the aliveness that anchors you. So some attention is there.

It's the opening into spaciousness. The doorway is the inner body, one could say. Words don't really work here.

And so there you play with form and formless. You play with form and are rooted in the formless. And that's a, don't wait for a critical situation to practice spaciousness.

In the most normal interactions, bring in spaciousness. That's your teaching. That's ultimately being, what being a teacher, a spiritual teacher means.

Ultimately a spiritual teacher has nothing really to teach on the level of form. He may have, he or she may have a few pointers on the level of form, but the teaching, the essence of the teaching is space. And if you look for anything else in a spiritual teacher, you're going to be sooner or later disappointed or let down, because you're looking to some form to do something for you.

But if you know that, then it's beautiful. Then it's, one can be grateful for the offering, because ultimately you're only getting a reflection of the essence of who you are, which is space. So all a teacher has to offer is to be there as space or spaciousness.

And that is also when you teach the case. If you think that there may be peripherals, there may be certain things that you apply, the modality, as we called it this morning, the modality of whatever work you do may be there, and yet the essence is space. That is what you bring.

And then whatever the modality is, you become very effective. And people might think

it's the modality that's doing it. Whatever technique you're using, whatever you do, they might think this is the great thing, without realizing that that's not really it.

That which has power, the power to transform, the power to awaken, is space. So that is your function, is to be there as nobody. Somebody gave me a nice little passage on specialness, and this is very true.

The ego wants to be special in one way or another. If it cannot be special in victory, it can still be special in misery, as long as it's special. And so to be there as nobody special, or no, because that means is nobody, simply as spacious consciousness, a field of awareness.

That's the essence of the teacher, the teaching, and that's really all that you need. If you have that, the form will come, or maybe there'll be hardly any form, or some form may come for a while. But that's the essence.

So Freud, I think, got it a little bit wrong when they, although it's fine, when they asked him, how do you qualify to be a psychoanalyst? And he said, you must have interpreted your own dreams. Well, that's useful too.

But what is the essence of being a successful therapist, a healer, counselor, body worker, anything, is you are the bringer of space. And then it could happen that people confuse the space with a form when they come to you. It can happen too.

And they think the form is very special, because they feel so good when they come to you. Why do they feel good? Because they're meeting themselves.

Ultimately, the essence of space is being reflected back. And so they feel, of course, it feels good to be yourself. It's the ultimate satchitananda, being, consciousness, bliss, to be yourself, the being, being itself.

Of course, that is, it is beautiful to be yourself, to be enjoying yourself, enjoy in yourself. And so they may come and tell you that you are very special. And that's a, and then comes another little temptation to you through that, because there still may still be remnants of egoic consciousness in you, just waiting for that kind of thing.

And then somebody else tells you the same, same thing. And more people confirm that, yes, indeed, you are powerful and special. And then something inside you begins to believe that.

And what happens? Form identity comes back in a subtle way. And the more form there is in you, the less space there is, or rather, the space becomes, so to speak, obscured again.

And then, after a while, they don't come anymore. Or by then, you might have built up a

reputation, which means many people have in their heads an image of who you are. And then they might come to you because their own image of who they are becomes enhanced through being close to you in your company.

So they may continue to come, even after space has been obscured again, for reasons of ego enhancement. This is how things can work when it's, it's good to know that, and then to see when it happens. See, you can be a teacher, even without having totally gone beyond ego.

There are people who are very effective in what they do. They may be doing body work, they may be doing counseling, they may be doing teaching in some form. They can be, they can be very helpful and remain totally clear in the teaching situation.

It happens. But when they go home, into their home environment, they get drawn into the old reactive. And two hours ago, they were totally, and it might not even have been an act, it could have been real.

Sometimes it's an act, but that you can notice. A funny story. My publisher told me he was calling up a very famous spiritual, of course, I won't mention the name.

He was calling up a world-famous spiritual teacher. The office secretary answered to discuss something about publication. And in the background, he could hear screaming.

And he said, what's that? Well, that's so and so, that's the teacher, he says, and the secretary, that goes on here all the time. I can't stand it anymore.

But I know that this teacher is doing great work. I've listened to some talks and read some books, and she's doing beautiful work. Not at home yet.

Not in the office yet. Maybe that comes last. So it's only when certain areas that are connected with egoic identity are touched, then that could interfere even with a teaching situation.

For example, if you were giving counseling sessions to your investment advisor, and the stock market is going down, and the ego needs someone to blame, many people have fear around those areas. So then you would lose presence in the counseling session. Alertness helps greatly to be alert within yourself.

And if you notice ego in yourself, just the noticing of it, or some egoic reaction, some needing to be special again, and before you know it, it's come out of your mouth. Before you know it, you dropped a name to somebody, just to show that you know these important people. And you didn't even, it wasn't planned, it just came out.

And then you notice it. Or you may notice some reaction in the middle of the reaction. You may suddenly notice what's going on.

There's an ego movement here, an old egoic reaction. The moment you notice ego, it's not really ego anymore. It's only a conditioned reaction.

A conditioned reaction, certain conditioned reactions may linger for quite a while inside you, and come up when the appropriate triggers come, the egoic, the reaction comes, the conditioned reaction comes. The moment you see it as a conditioned reaction, it may be anger, it may be some kind of automatic mechanism to either protect your self-image or strengthen your self-image, usually one or the other. And the moment you notice it, it's not really ego anymore.

It's still a conditioned reaction, totally identified with it anymore. It's only when you're totally identified with a conditioned reaction, then it's ego. When you're not totally identified, it's a conditioned reaction, it's not really ego anymore.

So that's, and then without the self in it, then the conditioned reaction loses its energy force after a while. It's not being replenished. So these are interesting things.

Teaching situations have, will bring their own kinds of challenges, as every spiritual teacher knows. And quite a few spiritual teacher have succumbed to the challenges. And well, what does that mean?

Does that mean what they taught was never true? No, it doesn't mean that. What they taught came through space consciousness.

That the unconditioned consciousness is nobody's property, and it's nobody's attainment. Even to say he has attained enlightenment is a delusion brought about by language. We say he has attained as if that were something anybody could attain, like now he's got it.

It's, it is there in the absence of him or her, in the absence of the egoic person. It shines as the natural state shines. And just as the sun can also be obscured by clouds again, and it doesn't, the sun doesn't mind, and it doesn't mean that the sunshine was all delusion.

So, and then the clouds come back, so, and then people say, well, can, has he lost it? Well, he never had it, or she never had it, so he can't lose it, because he can't have it. It's there as you become transparent, so to speak, to it.

The density goes of form, identification with form. So those questions are really irrelevant, they don't make sense. And people say, once you're enlightened, can you lose it again?

Well, no, you can't have it, so you can't lose it. So it's happened that people, then after a while, the teaching lost its power, because it didn't arise out of space, out of the stillness anymore. And then for a while, they might still teach from memory, but it loses already,

it loses power through that.

And then, and then all, there may still be the books there, and there may be power in the books that happens. It's fine. So it's not equating realization, spiritual realization, and who the essence of who the teacher is, with a form, with a personality that has attained something, or could lose it.

And so that's important in your relationship with a spiritual teacher, and as many of you are destined also to be, some of you already are, in some ways, in a wider sense, each one of you already is a spiritual teacher. And in a more formal sense, some of you already are spiritual teachers. And many others are destined also, because that's the one field where there are many job vacancies.

There's a huge demand. So get out of Silicon Valley, or wherever. It's not, they're not making, not producing more vacancies, more.

And some people may be here because they lost their jobs there. And so when you teach, then just be very alert, because the egoic patterns in yourself may want to use that in the service of a newfound identity. So just alertness.

There's a question here, and then we'll have some questions or comments on perhaps what we talked about this morning. Presence, bringing presence into working modalities, or, oh, I forgot to bring the letter that some somebody gave me. Somebody sent a The Power of Now to Prince Charles.

Thank you very much. And the office wrote back. The letter was here this morning.

Thank you on his behalf for The Power of Now. Whether he's going to read it, I don't know. But, well, he seems to be open to spiritual truth from the little that I know, which is a miracle in itself.

Somebody like that, who is not totally absorbed in their identity, that it is a miracle that there is an openness remains without even having gone through extreme suffering, except his marriage, of course. I'm one of those people who feel safe and still in nature or in soft countries like India. Here in the USA, my heart seems limited to accept the noise and constant chatter, which is normal everywhere.

I feel helpless by its force. You mentioned bringing spaciousness into this, and I am wanting that and accept the challenge. Yet there is some hatred that interferes, keeping me stuck and paralyzed.

Can you comment? Well, I suspect the answer is already in this one also, because it is in surrender to whatever is around you and whatever you feel inside yourself. If you feel, if you can't accept where you are, and of course, you can choose a softer part of the States.

Some parts of this country are softer than others, to use this term, of course, but you probably won't find India here. But beyond that, if you cannot accept what is around you, first of all, examine that and see whether it's true. When you say, I can't accept the harshness of this, I can't accept the noisiness of this place, the harshness of this place.

And when you say that, or when you think that, stop for a moment and see whether that is true, or whether that is a conditioned thought that tells you something that you believe in. I can't accept this. And then, as you believe in that thought completely, that I cannot accept this, you have the corresponding emotion that comes with not being able to accept this.

What is the hatred or anger? And that may start from, first of all, not looking clearly with alertness at a mind movement inside you, and which may not be true when you say, I can't accept this. And if you look closely, then you examine perhaps, what about I'm not willing to accept this?

Could that be more true? And very often, when you look closely, you see that what the mind called, I cannot accept this, translated means, I am not willing to accept this. And that is a great excuse for the ego to feel stuck in resistance.

I can't. But if you saw that what it really means is I'm not willing to accept it, then a door opens. Because then the possibility arises for your willingness to accept what it is right here.

Doesn't mean you can't move from Detroit to a little town in California or New Mexico, or from Manhattan to Taos, where everybody is into spiritual things. Those places will be softer, but maybe not soft enough for you. But see the shift from I cannot accept this, and I'm not willing to accept this.

Usually, that's what it is. And if you don't see the truth of it, and your mind insists that no, it's not unwilling, it's just, I can't. Well, what you do then is have space around that.

Have space around the fact that you cannot accept it. Have space around the anger or the hatred that you feel. It is as it is.

So by saying, accept that, then, it seems almost impossible. How can I accept the fact that I cannot accept? But you can.

You can accept that this is how you feel, and this is what your mind is saying. And so, what can you do with that, with the anger you feel of having to be here? I'd rather be in India, not here.

This is a harsh and noisy place. I hate everybody. And you're not being released.

You could go to India, but for some reason, you're here. I don't know the reason, but for

some reason, you're not being released to go to India. If it were of overriding importance, somehow you would manage to go and live in India and be happy forever after.

Now to some people, the opposite happens. They are happy here, and when they travel to India, they can't wait to get out. And then they say, I can't accept this.

It's awful. Similar, often what people learn there is they are not willing to accept it, so they suffer. So whenever that arises, I can't accept, see which statement is more true.

I can't accept, or I'm not willing to accept. And if after investigation, you find that I cannot is still true for you, then accept that. And whatever emotions go with it, that's what is.

And then you have space around it. That space is India. That's the essence of really what India means to you, and means perhaps on a universal scale, India stands for the inner dimension.

For space. America stands for, one could say, the outer, doing, getting things done, creating on the external level. So you have the two polarities.

So when you have space around something, so you have India with you around it. So you could have America being contained by India. And then, just a little bit of that, is at first you might not get much sense of space around it, just a little.

And then you notice there's actually quite a lot of space around. Whatever you feel, whatever thing you react to, or whatever the reaction is, there's actually quite a lot of space there. India is actually quite big.

And then you come to a point where you don't need to go to India anymore, because you are in India. India is here. America is there.

Please offer guidelines on doing private sessions. Well, that's what really we've been doing here all the time. The best private sessions are those that come by themselves, organically.

You're sitting somewhere, somebody comes, asks, what time is it? You exchange a few words. And then, somehow, he or she feels impelled to say something, ask you something.

And then you say something. What do you mean by that? A few words, an encounter, seeming chance encounter.

If that, that is a beautiful, the most beautiful way to, for it to happen by itself. But if you feel you need to have something more formal, put an ad in the paper. Space, sessions on space.

There are no guidelines as to how to conduct a session, obviously, because you are there as space. What comes out of that, who can predict at any moment? What form it'll take, if any, nobody can predict.

Your only responsibility is to be there as spacious awareness. And then the rest, it, it, it, you don't do it. You don't have to do anything.

Just be there as space. And that's a great relief. As long as you think you have to do something that's troublesome, you get stressed.

Before a person arrives, you will get into stress. If you think you have to do something, or before you give a talk, you'll be in great stress. What am I going to say?

Are they going to like me? Am I going to transform them? I may have mentioned before, the very first talk I ever gave, formal talk to a group invited in London, Theosophical Society invited me to give a talk.

And since I'd never given a talk, my little mind said, you better make, take some notes before the talk. So I had a piece of paper, which I brought with me, put it on the table. There were maybe, I don't remember, 35 people.

And I talked on spiritual aspects of psychotherapy. That's the kind of thing they wanted. And it went well.

And I came to a halt, a beautiful pause space. And then the mind said, you better have a look at the paper now. And at that moment, I could feel the entire energy field in the room going from presence to mind.

So I looked and then I started again. It was still in mind. It took five minutes before presence arose again.

And then it happened again. I came to a stop. The mind said, okay, what's the next point?

That was the first and last time I think I ever had a piece of paper. It would not have mattered if I'd forgotten eight out of 10 vitally important points. It would not have mattered.

So you will also, I know some of you are also teaching, doing workshops, and it's often the question of structure, to what extent to adhere to the structure, which might already be working for you. And to what extent to step into the unknown, the unknowable. To what extent you step into that space where there's no foothold, no scaffolding.

And of course, that's where the truly powerful teaching arises. Not that you cannot do useful work, but the ultimate awakening, that which has the power to awaken, can only come from presence, stillness, spaciousness, only from that. The other can have the

power to make your life a little better, to improve your life here and there.

But it won't be the awakening, unless you happen to have somebody in your group who is so ready, like a very ripe apple, so ripe, that all it requires is a gentle breeze, and it falls. And then it could happen that even you might just be giving a quote of the Buddha, and that'll do it for that one person. That was the last thing that that person needed to hear.

And then that person might say, I awoke in your workshop, when I heard the words, all things are intrinsically one. When you quoted those words, I awoke. I thank you forever.

And you say, oh, well. So that can happen. But this is, would be more rare.

The power, that which has the power to awaken comes from, you have to step beyond any agenda. You can still use agenda as the external framework, but within that, have the courage to step out into the unknown. And then you could have a, you could still use the name that you use.

I have a workshop, you could say you have a workshop on, you could use any, anything to, and the hidden teaching will be different. You could do a workshop on creating abundance in your life. And that could be the outer framework, but the hidden teaching in there could be something deeper, because the depths of what abundance is, is such it ananda.

It's the realization of joy of the joy of being. So you could take that, and then the truth. But it is essential to step out of crutches, scaffolding, whatever you want to call it, into this, the openness of space.

Step into not knowing. Such beauty in that. To sit before a group with no idea in your head what you're going to say.

Now this could be some person's nightmare. But when you become comfortable, it's beautiful. That openness in which there's nobody there.

When you don't know anything, you're nobody. Not have the feeling that you know more than these people. You don't.

I know I don't. I know that many people in my audiences definitely know more than I. They have read more books, gone to more workshops.

I'm sure there are many, don't know what the percentage is, who know more than I. So it's not that I definitely don't know more than they. So it's the less rather than the more.

I know less. In fact, I know nothing in that state of spaciousness. And it's not only in teaching situations.

You can live your life in that way. As an open space and a spaciousness rather than a person. And then there's still on the periphery, yes, there's still a person.

There's still a few characteristics left. There may be a particular way in which you walk, a way in which you gesticulate or speak. That's only the remnants.

On the external level, a few of these things remain. But the person has become transparent. And that's the only way to be an effective teacher, to be nobody, to know nothing.

And then words come. That also means refraining from interpreting, this excessive interpreting that people do in their lives. Whenever they come and meet somebody, go into a new situation, they quickly have to come to some kind of conclusion about this person or this situation or how they're related to their life or their story.

Quickly pronounce judgment upon something or someone. That's how it is. And you've limited yourself to a tiny thought form.

It might be true, relatively speaking, but then many other statements would also be true. So to refrain from that excessive interpretation as you go of places and situations and people, just let them be as they are. What for?

Why having to put it in some box with a label on it? And so then remain, that spaciousness then remains with you. Not just, it's beautiful if you can be spacious and open in a teaching situation, but it is not enough.

Otherwise you'll be like the famous teacher who is shouting in her office and probably shouting even more at home, because home is even more challenging than office for many people. It is very rare in the West to have a teacher who uses no words. They exist in India, people who don't speak at all.

You just come into their presence and they look at you. And when you look at them, you know there's nobody there. Not a person is there.

Not an identity. Just spacious consciousness. And so there are people who just sit there all day long.

Whoever comes, they look at them. Some of them may speak occasionally. Some don't speak at all.

And that's enough. If you are open, just need to sit there, look, and transformation happens. But Western people come with a very dense ego.

Indians also have ego, but the Western ego is particularly strong. Often Indian egos collapse when they come to a spiritual teacher. Temporarily true, but they go, oh.

Even people who are in their work may be full of ego. They come to a teacher and they go, oh. There is that openness there.

Now, it may be that a Westerner is a much harder nut to crack, as some Indian teachers found out too, especially when they came to the West. They got cracked and they didn't crack the West. But there is a teacher, there's Mother Meera, I believe, an Indian teacher living in Germany, who very rarely, I think, speaks.

She may look at you or give you a hug. And many people come to her. How many people become transformed?

I don't know. Perhaps many. But the West also, the Western ego, I believe, needs to be looked at, needs to be seen for what it is, needs to be recognized.

And that is why one aspect of this teaching is to point to the ego and see how it works, so that you recognize it when it comes. All those conditioned mind movements. In India, very often, they ignore it completely.

And sometimes that works. The ego doesn't like that, of course. Some teachings challenge the ego.

Some Western teachers do that. Occasionally, in Zen, it is the tendency. Zen would challenge the ignorance, that is ego.

A few Indian teachers have done it too, but it's more common in India to ignore it. Some Westerners also, they challenge the ego. Now, what, when you teach, whether you become one of those teachers who challenges the ignorance in someone else, which merely means identification with conditioned patterns, which is ego, and you challenge that, and you attack, if you notice ego in someone, somebody gets up to ask a question, and you notice it is an ego-motivated question, perhaps the person wants to be special, perhaps the person wants to be right, wants to show that you are wrong, or knows more than you, or knows somebody who is better than you, has met some other teacher, whatever, or some other subtle forms of ego.

And so, there are certain teachers, when they notice ego in someone, they will attack that person. They're not really attacking the human being. They're attacking the ego form.

But it appears to be a confrontational teaching, and that sometimes works for some people. It can crack open the shell of ego, and for others, it doesn't work at all. I look through the ego, ignore it, and look through it, and others might challenge it.

Usually, people are drawn to whoever teacher they need. Some people need the confrontational teacher. Their ego shell is so hard, there's only two choices left for transformation.

Either you go to a very harsh teacher who is almost going to hit you, or actually hits you, or you suffer a lot to crack the shell, if ego is very, very dense. Either intense suffering will do it, and perhaps a harsh teacher. Suffering works better, usually.

Or a combination of the two. You suffer and suffer, and then finally, you get to a teacher who doesn't leave you any room for silliness. Ego, silly, cuts through.

The Zen teacher hits you with a stick, when the mind comes up, can you explain again, what did you mean by, and I didn't quite understand your concept of, and that awakens you out of the mind stream. The mind loves to play around with concepts, words, then a question leading to an answer, leading to more questions, and another question, and figuring out. Any questions?

Now, nobody wants to ask a question. You have a question? No?

Did you? Okay.

[Speaker 2] (3:36:14 - 3:37:13)

I didn't know I was going to be able to ask it. In your writings, you say the key is to be in a state of permanent connectedness with the inner body, and to feel it at all times. When you're talking about spaciousness, are you creating that spaciousness by feeling your inner body?

And, how can you get to the point, I mean, it's been about three years every day, trying to feel the inner body, and I can go for brief periods, even a couple of hours sometimes, but very rarely. Are you feeling energy flowing at all moments?

[Speaker 1] (3:37:15 - 3:37:16)

Thank you.

[Speaker 2] (3:37:17 - 3:37:27)

When you had this change, when you woke up that morning, you just felt energy flowing?

[Speaker 1] (3:37:28 - 3:44:50)

Yes, to be, now the inner body is the opening, it is not an object as such, it is an opening. So, when, because we're using language, it appears as if we were referring to an object that you need to be in touch with, and that's because of the use of language, because every word, whatever you attach a word to, makes it into something. Now, we are talking about a dimension that is not the dimension of things.

So, words are never quite right. So, even to say to be in permanent connectedness with

the inner body, I'm glad you asked that, isn't quite right. It was an attempt to say something.

It's to be in connectedness with that to which the inner body is an opening, spaciousness. So, that is always there in the background, so to speak, and sometimes in the foreground, but it's always there as peace, one could say, a permanent, it's another way of putting it, a permanent field of peace that is not related to whatever happens or doesn't happen out here. So, and yes, there is an aliveness that is there also, part of that, throughout the entire energy field of the body, but it's deeper than that.

It's not just feeling an aliveness as I sit here and speak, as the words come, to feel, yes, there is an aliveness in every cell of the body also, but that's not all. There is, every word is not quite right. There is beyond that a spaciousness, a sense of space, and it's, I didn't know that at first.

If you had asked me when it first happened, the word space never occurred to me. The only word that occurred to me was peace. I saw it as inner, a deep inner peace.

So, it's good to not get attached too much to one pointer, because then that can mislead you. Peace is just as good, a permanent sense of inner peace. Now, what is peace?

Is it just peace, just the absence of conflict? No, it's, peace is something deeper. Peace is a, really, an alive sense of joy, alive, still, joyful stillness, peace.

All these things, the words separate things. That's why in India, to describe that state of connectedness with being, with being present in India, they string three words together as if it were a single word. Sat, cit, ananda.

Sat, being, because it's the joy of being. Cit, consciousness, presence. Ananda, bliss.

Sat, cit, ananda is because if you separate it into three words, people think there are three things there, but it's one. So, we could say, space peace, or joy space peace, so that, because one pointer usually is not enough and somehow gives you wrong, take several pointers and then forget them. So, yes, there is, I sense the aliveness, as even as I speak, there's an aliveness in the body, but there's also a deeper peace behind it, deeper than, even deeper than the aliveness of the body.

There's a deep sense of alive peace, and that's always there. But you don't need to look for it. You don't need to look for it.

Just looking for it is, will stop you from finding it, because looking for it creates a movement away from what is. It's to just, to be totally accepting of what is, then it's there. So, if you don't have it, you totally accept that you don't have it, and it might not be true at all.

It might be a mind movement that tells you, you don't have it, you don't know where it is, or the mind says, I can't feel the inner body. Is that true? I can't feel the inner body, not now.

I'll try again tomorrow, maybe. I can't feel it now. Is that true?

And very often you find it's not true at all. I can feel it. So, not, you don't need to look for peace or joy or even space.

You couldn't, you can't really look for it. It's, it is there when you look for nothing except what is now. I was totally miserable, and I stopped wanting it to be any different.

So, there wasn't a surrender to what is, including everything, unhappiness, just it is as it is. And then suddenly there was more. It wasn't just that, there was space, but I didn't call it space.

So, all really that is required of you is to just be with what is right now, accept what is. Yes, if you can feel the body, feel the body right now. And usually that's very easy to do.

Be careful with the mind. The mind is always looking for something else. Don't look for anything else except what's already here.

And if you can just feel the aliveness in your hand, it's enough. Don't need to look for more. Don't look for anything.

Can you feel as you stand there, can you feel an aliveness throughout? Yes. That's enough.

Stay with that.

[Speaker 2] (3:44:51 - 3:45:00)

Also, I'm particularly conscious when there's any tension. Yes. It's more noticeable than it was years ago.

[Speaker 1] (3:45:00 - 3:45:10)

Yes. Tension is usually unconscious, and when you make it conscious, its lifespan is considerably shorter.

[Speaker 2] (3:45:13 - 3:45:14)

Thank God.

[Speaker 1] (3:45:18 - 3:47:32)

So, tension is always produced unconsciously, because usually a person doesn't say, I'm

going to make myself really anxious and tense now. You could, in fact, you could do it as a practice if you wanted to, to know what it really feels like to be tense. Some, there's even a technique that whatever state you're in, the practitioner will ask you to take it to an extreme.

So if the person comes and says, I'm so angry, the practitioner says, you're not angry enough. Be more angry. Take it to an extreme.

Be really angry. Or if the person comes and says, I'm so, I'm so depressed and sad, he says, be more depressed. Be more sad.

Take it to an extreme. And it is true. Anything that you take to an extreme will collapse eventually.

So people usually stay unhappy because they don't go to the extreme of unhappiness. They come to a modus vivendi with unhappiness. But if you take unhappiness to an extreme, you cannot actually live with it.

That happened to me, fortunately. Unhappiness became so extreme, I couldn't live with it. If it's not extreme, then you can, for the rest of your life, you can be unhappy a lot of the time, and be happy being unhappy.

The ego quite likes that. So any state, it's something you could play with. I rarely say it.

Taking it to an extreme often makes, but it may not be possible to really consciously take it to an extreme, make yourself even more miserable. Maybe not. Life is enough.

Life does, gives you what you need. Can you feel the inner body?

[Speaker 2] (3:47:34 - 3:47:35)

Yes. Yeah.

[Speaker 1] (3:47:36 - 3:52:05)

It's good while you sit here, to just, there's not much else to do. Be in that. And then you can see that some people feel it more here.

That's fine. That's good. There may be certain parts of the body that are more prominent, and that's fine.

And then you, so they are perceiving, and then the miracle is, some of you have been experiencing this miracle sitting here. You can be here, present, aware, be here as the field of awareness, perceive, without the interference of thought. Except occasional little things floating in and out, but mostly just a clarity of perception.

And it's a miraculous thing to be able to sit here and perceive this body, this voice, the

flowers, the room, and not calling it anything, not interpreting it, letting it be as it is. This means not really being here as a person anymore, just as a consciousness, a field of consciousness, a field of awareness. That's the shift.

And you may notice that shift happening in your life more in strange, in the most unlikely situation. Sometimes you have the shift from being a person with a past and some needy future and thinking, and suddenly there's a field, even you might be sitting in your office or in your kitchen, and simply a field of aware presence. And then somebody comes into the room, and you're still a field of aware presence.

And that person is talking, you're still a field of aware presence. And then suddenly words come out of the field of aware presence. And they'll be, they have a different quality, even if you just say, would you like a cup of tea?

It's different. That is love, to see the world like that, to relate to the world like that, to interact like that, is love. I rarely mention love because it's unnecessary.

Space comes out of that. It's dangerous the moment you mention it, the mind has a new concept. Okay, I need to be more loving.

How can I be more loving? As if you needed to become more loving when the essence of who you are is already that. And the mind says, okay, I need to find, how can I be more, I'll try.

I have to try and be more loving with this person. It's tough. And then for a while you try, but it is not quite right.

And before you know it, there's an outburst of anger. Oh, I wasn't loving at all. What have I done?

You see, then another of these many voices that go on here, another little voice says, you see, you can't, you can't be loving. You're a fraud. All that, your spiritual stuff is a fraud.

See what you're doing. You know that little voice? And it's just a little voice.

That's how it operates. It loves doubt. It loves to create doubt.

So you don't need to be more loving or more peaceful. You are already that.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:19 - 3:52:45)

Thank you. Eckhart, how does it happen that we are healthcare professionals here today? Far larger numbers of people are touched by other occupations.

And ours seems to be a system which is dissolving.

[Speaker 1] (3:52:52 - 3:52:58)

This is the mainstream healthcare system you're referring to. Yeah.

[Speaker 2] (3:52:58 - 3:52:59)

In America.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:00 - 3:53:00)

Yes.

[Speaker 2] (3:53:00 - 3:53:02)

I don't know about Canada.

[Speaker 1] (3:53:02 - 4:33:32)

Yes. Well, in the entire Western world, it tends to be similar. And most of the world these days is the Western world.

So, yes, then this is only one of the many, thank you, the many systems that are manifesting increasingly in signs of dysfunction, where things just don't work anymore. Maybe it worked once. It was fine once.

And the entire human mind is in that way. The human mind had its place. It was an evolutionary stage we had to go through.

But the products of the human mind, all those things that the human mind produced from its state of disconnectedness with space consciousness, with the stillness, are becoming more and more dysfunctional. So there is the mainstream healthcare system, the pharmaceutical industries, which are producing more and more things and totally dominated or largely dominated by the profit motive. If they found a miracle cure, which didn't, that is, didn't promise profit, they might not even produce it.

And that's only, it's only, there are all these institutions and organizations and corporations, economic, political, social, educational, universities. There are many, many signs of dysfunction where things just don't work anymore. And that's because we are coming to the end of an evolutionary, evolutionary cycle, which is thought to be exclusively based in thought.

And when you come to the end of an evolutionary cycle, any species that comes to the end of an evolutionary cycle, the end will show increasing signs of dysfunction. And that's the simple reason is that you're approaching the end of a cycle. It doesn't mean that there's something wrong with the human mind.

It doesn't mean it never should have happened. No, it was right. It happened.

And what is happening now is also absolutely right. But we have to see, and then, then the dysfunction is there in every individual. It's not just in the, the structures, the external structures created by the human mind.

In every individual, those who do not now step beyond as you are, but there are still many who are totally trapped in egoic consciousness. There are young, some young people, especially those that are born to relatively conscious parents already are born perhaps with more awareness than we ever had when we were born. But that is still a minority.

There are still many young people who are born into the ego-dominated environment, and who are begin at a very early age to manifest signs of great unhappiness, of impatience, of continuous restlessness, of hyperactivity, of aggression, even violence or emotional violence. So they are, they are the, the, in each individual, the dysfunction manifests, unless that individual has already stepped beyond, has already gone, is already going through what humanity is destined to go through as a whole. But this is only you are the beginning.

But it's happening very fast. The power of now is read by many, many people now that I could never have foreseen that it would grow so quickly. And it's so many people respond now.

Even that is still a minority. Yes, but it's enough. It's growing fast.

But we need to see the dysfunction is not only in the external structures, but also within each individual. But it's all manifestation of one dysfunction. It's not just in your field where you work.

It's in people. It's in the governments. It's in the economy.

It's in the corporations, which are just extensions of ego. Nobody to blame, really. Oh, well, it's a pity.

It feels so good to blame these, the greedy CEOs of these corporations, what they, what are they doing? Yeah, of course, they are doing it. It just happens.

And you can replace by any other ego and they would be doing it. It's the same with corrupt governments. Then they have a revolution and they say, this is the end of corruption.

Finally, the people are liberated. A new government moves in, which just means other egos. And two or three years later, the same corruption, exactly the same, maybe worse.

And so there's the ego's need for more in the corporations. All they're interested in is, they don't know what they are there for anymore, except they need to produce more.

More.

So the dysfunction then is only beginning on the external level. It's only beginning. And we will see it more and more, many institutions and organizations and corporations not making it anymore.

And increasing, yes, increasing conflict and violence as the old consciousness is still playing itself out. Increasing disorientation in individual human beings, increasing unhappiness, violence, depression, confusion, madness, identifying with mad mind structures, collective belief systems, whether they be religions or political systems. All that happening, different manifestations of the end of a cycle.

And that's fine. It cannot be otherwise. And as that happens, the new is already arising within the crumbling structure where you and some of you work.

This is very beautiful. Within the dissolving, crumbling structure where things don't work anymore, something new is already arising, and that is your consciousness is there. Whether, to what extent the old structure will have to collapse, and to what extent a transformation from within is possible so that it changes from within without a total collapse, we don't know yet.

It depends from case to case. In some cases, it'll collapse completely before anything new arises. In other cases, a somewhat more gentle transition, although the dysfunction will be there, but a somewhat more gentle transition may be possible as it changes from within.

And as those who represent the old consciousness leave, that could happen. So we cannot predict from institution to institution, corporation to corporation, what form it'll take, whether there will be a collapse or a transformation from within. All you can know and be responsible for is yourself this moment, in a space at this moment, and respond to whatever this moment requires.

You will be there as long as you are needed there. And if there comes to be an incompatibility between who you are and the vibrational frequency of your being, as presence arises, the vibrational frequency changes. And if there is the incompatibility becomes too great between the surrounding energy field where you work and the vibrational frequency of your own, then it may happen that you will be chucked out, remove yourself or be removed by life from those surroundings.

But if the surroundings are capable of transformation, then you and others who also have gone or are going through that inner transition, then will draw others in too. And you may remain then, and as the world around you becomes transformed. So it will be interesting to watch what happens.

Don't get drawn into fear, anxiety. You cannot underestimate how vital your state of

consciousness is in what you experience as the world around you. What a vital part of what you experience as the world your consciousness is.

How important that is. To such an extent, the Course in Miracles even says, although don't try to understand that statement, when the question is asked, how many people are needed to save the world? The answer is one.

And it's you. You are a microcosm of the entire world. So that's, there is, that which is within you, that power, that is the power of the unmanifested, the source of all, is infinitely greater than anything in the manifested realm, than any structure in the manifested realm.

And some of the structures look pretty big, but it's nothing. They're just, they're dust. Dust, well, not really dust, molecules temporarily arranged as certain structures.

But nothing in itself, it can crumble just like that. And many of them will. Gone.

Communism looked so deeply entrenched that a totally immobile system, and even the people in it, they were all, you could see the presidents of Russia, the Politburo people sitting there, totally entrenched and immobile. And they were, they seemed to be saying, here nothing is going to change ever. The power structures are so deeply entrenched here, nothing here is going to change.

Here we are. And then the armies went by with huge rockets and tanks and soldiers, and they greeted. And when you looked, you said, oh, nothing is ever going to shake that.

And within a few years, it crumbled. What was that? Gone.

And so you look, and then you can look at all this, whatever humans have produced in the manifested realm, it looks, can look overpowering, but in itself is nothing. The Jesus said, there's a little account in the Gospels where they are visiting a town, and the disciples of Jesus say, oh, look at this temple. Look at these huge boulders, these huge stones on which the temple is built.

And Jesus, I don't think the words have come down to us quite accurately. Jesus said, it's, this is nothing. It's just dust.

It can crumble in three days. It can crumble in three seconds. And so there's, it's so easy to become misled into believing that there is a power out there, and perhaps a power that is too overpowering for you, or a power that is threatening you, or that you couldn't possibly change or do anything about.

It's nothing compared to, because that which is within you is the very source essence of all life. You are that. And nothing in the manifested realm can be greater than that.

Anything manifested is like a dust of smoke, just a whoosh, or a soap bubble compared

to that. And so when you see how fleeting, how ephemeral and short-lived the structures are of the world, and now it's becoming easier to see. If you lived in the 19th century, the structure still had a certain heaviness, and there was a certainty in people that their beliefs were correct.

There was a certainty. Scientists were certain that they'd solved most of the problems. They knew how the universe worked.

Einstein hadn't arrived yet. Newton was there. And they knew that, yes, when the gravity, the apple falls, there's certain laws.

Science has all the answers. And before that, there was the religious certainty, and there was a scientific certainty. There were the monarchies, there were the institutions that people believed in, that countries they believed in, and then certain things happened.

And those beliefs crumbled, the institutions crumbled, and now there's the uncertainty. Everything is crumbling, and that's beautiful. That's wonderful.

So let it crumble. Nothing, it's simply a transformation, and then eventually a different manifested world will arise, reflecting a different state of consciousness in humans. And it'll be different.

I'm not, I wouldn't say, I promise you paradise, but it is likely that it will be a more gentle, more loving place, not devoid of polarities, no, but a benevolence to it. So, you can actually see what, before you had to travel to India to become aware of how fragile the physical structures are, because in India, the physical structures are quite loose. Things on the physical level don't work as they should usually, and then even building structures, they seem to be a little bit shaky in many cases.

And so people had to travel to India to get a sense of how shaky the material world, the physical universe actually is. In the West, for a long time, we thought all these structures are unshakable. Material foundations are unshakable.

The structures that we have built up are permanent, unshakable. So the illusion of solidity was very easy to live in. That illusion, if you lived in the West, especially in the so called highly developed countries, the solidity of the world, and you had your pension plan and your life insurance, and until something happened and you became aware of your own mortality, and for many people that came as a shock.

That's why even now in the Western world, death is a taboo to a large extent. Don't talk about that. Let's not talk about death.

But then it came to everybody and suddenly some great shock came. I'm going to die. The world is not as solid as I thought.

But often it came quite late in life. Now, as these man-made structures are beginning to show increasing signs of dysfunction, even in the West, we can begin to see that these things are not lasting. We can begin to see how fleeting the physical realm, the phenomenal realm is, how short-lived all structures are.

The collapse of the two towers was almost a symbolic thing of that great achievement collapsed completely. There was a similar symbolic thing at the beginning of this century, before the First World War, and it was a big ship that sank, Titanic. And people said, this ship is unsinkable.

It is a triumph of technology. And its first voyage, it sank. And so to see, when you see that now, more and more around you, that things dissolve and crumble, that is a, when you accept that that's how it is, it is in the nature of the physical realm to do that, when you accept that, that is another way of finding, of discovering space consciousness.

The awareness of the impermanence of all physical structures, of all, the awareness of death, one could say. And when you accept that, what is it that remains when something dissolves? Space.

So that's why simply to, just to contemplate the fleetingness of forms, to the egoic mind, it's fearful, because the egoic mind itself is form. So it's fearful, it doesn't want to look at death, because it sees its own death in it, when it looks at something that dies or a structure collapses. But if you can accept that, then you go beyond the egoic reaction, and you are with the fact of the impermanence of all structures.

And to accept that, suddenly an inner peace arises, when you face death without turning away, without finding some kind of mental explanation for it, but face it completely and see how short-lived everything is out here. Even things that looked so solid, how short-lived, and face that fact. And then, in the background, you sense a peace.

What really should have been a fearful thing, the ego would say, to face death, isn't that a dreadful thing? No, it's beautiful. Buddhists have known that for a long time.

That's Buddhist monk, Buddhist monks in some traditions, regularly they visit the morgue, where dead bodies are kept, and then they said, bring out the dead bodies. And they bring out the dead bodies in the room, and then the monks sit there in meditation for two or three hours, contemplating the dead bodies. Not thinking about death, just facing death directly.

It's one of the deepest meditations, the contemplation of death, of impermanence. And it could be the death of a structure, it could be the death of a body. There's a certain, when you visit a ruin, maybe an old ruin, maybe when you go to Rome or Athens, and that's another, there's a strange sense of peace there, when you step into a ruin that perhaps was a building 2,000 years ago, and it's hard now, mostly collapsed, just a little

bit left.

Peace, a dissolving form in an advanced stage of dissolution. And the more advanced, the more the formless shines through the form. And that's why it's so peaceful when you're truly present to step into an ancient ruin.

I mentioned before in a talk, I visited the ruin of a house that burned down maybe 40 years ago in a little park near Malibu, and a nature reserve, beautiful surroundings. And at the, just at the entrance into the garden, which is also overgrown, and there's the ruins of the house, I saw a little sign, the city council of Malibu had put it up, and the sign read like an ancient sutra, a holy saying. It wasn't meant to be.

It said, danger, all structures are unstable. The first word was unnecessary. All structures are unstable is enough.

It's not really danger. And that is contained in the word, Cause and Miracles, which at the beginning is summarized in a few lines. And if you understand those lines, you can forget about the cause.

And those lines are, nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists. Herein lies the peace of God.

Nothing real can be threatened. Any form, of course, can be threatened. But ultimately, the form is not ultimately real.

The life within the form, yes, the unmanifested, but that cannot be threatened. And when it says, herein lies the peace of God, means in knowing this, in this realization, lies the peace of God. The peace of God is the peace that is not derived from form.

But from the formless. I'm a few minutes late because I stopped a few times to look up at the sky. It's a magical night.

The vastness of space. The moon is full or almost full. It's so obvious.

The truth is so obvious. If you look around or you go out, it's the vastness of space. Infinite space.

And then there are a few things in space. So what we talked about, the two dimensions, it's so obvious. As within, so without.

As without, so within. As above, so below. When you look around you, what you see is things in space.

What you usually don't see, or you can't really see it, is space. But these two dimensions make up the world. This is very simple.

Probably a four-year-old could understand that. And I said somewhere in the book, and I'll say it again, this is a statement of a somewhat mystical nature that cannot be verified through intellectual or scientific analysis. Nor does it have to be.

When you look into space, it's really your own depths. It's the infinity that you seem to see out there. It's your own inner space externalized.

It's the world. Don't try to understand that. I don't.

But it's so clear. And even that can be an opening to go out at night, a clear night, and simply to look at space. You can't see space.

You only see the things that are in space. But there's this incredible mystery of space itself. And when you bring awareness to space, not trying to understand it or think about it, the inner space is there.

That was my first meditation. I didn't realize it was a meditation when I was in my teens, 13, 14, 15. We had just moved to Spain where the sky is often clear.

And so I would lie on the terrace and look without thought into space. Occasionally thoughts then came in and out again. The thoughts that a 13, 14 year old has would come sometimes.

If aliens come now, should I go with them or not? For a long time that was a dilemma. So after our session, I recommend that you acknowledge that dimension out there.

And at the same time within you. Of course, we're acknowledging it here too. Within.

In the right hand side, outside pocket of my coat, there are a few written questions. I may have lost one or two on the way.

[Speaker 3] (4:33:35 - 4:33:36)

Thank you.

[Speaker 1] (4:33:58 - 7:11:29)

Start with a short one. If nothing matters, why should everything be honored? Two small corrections in the question.

It's not so much that nothing matters, but that nothing matters that much. It may matter in relative terms, but it doesn't matter absolutely in absolute terms. And another little correction.

Why should everything be honored? There's no should. And what does that mean to be honored?

To be acknowledged, to be given attention. What you honor is a term that I would not normally use. And I will modify it somewhat.

But it comes from Christian teachings. That is what you honor or what you love is not the creature or the created, but you love and honor the creator in the created. I wouldn't call it creator because that brings up the idea of some external agent.

That creates things. But there is a truth hidden there to honor the life essence, the one consciousness within each form. Although the form is short-lived as all forms are.

So to honor it is to honor that. But really what that means is there's a recognition there. You can't really honor it unless there's a recognition.

The recognition comes when you approach something or someone or any life form without the conceptual barriers created by the thinking mind. When you approach it without that, there comes a recognition that is not on a conceptual level. A sensing, a knowing of the other as not different from you.

A sensing, a knowing of the other as ultimately yourself. And when that is recognized, then you honor everything in the manifested realm. Because you recognize yourself.

And that honoring is also love. So when we say to honor, it's really to love it, to recognize it as in essence one with yourself. But should doesn't work.

So you should honor. Why should I? Why should I?

But it comes naturally in that recognition, the honoring of life. Even of life, the forms of life. Although yes, they are short-lived, but they are honored also.

The life within the form, the great mystery. The unmanifested within the manifested. And then on the level of form, whatever shapes and forms come and go, when that which is beyond form is recognized, then whatever happens on the level of form is recognized as only of relative importance, not absolute.

And then one could say, it matters, but it doesn't matter that much. What really matters is for you to know that essence around you in the other. So that ultimately there are no others.

And so the essence of egoic consciousness, the root of suffering, and also the root of evil, what we call evil, is complete identification with form. So that any other form is reduced to a mind object. Its life is not recognized because you are so identified with this form, both physical and psychological of the form of me, or even worse, the form of us, a group, a tribe, a group that only recognizes, that completely identifies with this, our belief, our form, our history, us.

And the more complete the identification with form is, the more suffering arises. The

more suffering you create for yourself and others, the more suffering you create in the world. And so if sometimes people ask about the nature of evil, and it is only that, completely trapped in your own form.

And then the opposite is true, that the recognition comes that you are in all forms. No longer trapped in that little bubble. Physical form, of course, you're somehow trapped in there for a while.

But then the bubble of the psychological form of me. And then from there you look out into a threatening world. Start from a short question, we go to a longer question.

But sometimes the answers may not be, there may be a long answer to a short question, and a short answer to a long question, or no answer at all. I don't know. It is so wonderful to see you again after such a long time.

My spiritual trip, journey, has taken some interesting and confusing turns since one and a half years ago. So I have a complex question. It is probably not a good question for live on tape.

But I will let you decide. We are doing it. Don't need to switch off.

So my question is, it seems that what motivates most of us in our study of your teachings is to achieve enlightenment, to reach the state that you are continuously describing. You're also advising us to do the techniques, look for the space, surrender to the moment, and so on. And yet you and many other enlightened people didn't wake up doing these techniques.

It's true. No doubt these techniques help end suffering or at least lessen suffering. But you woke up due to your suffering.

You have even said yourself that these techniques will not lead to enlightenment. So why do we do them? And just to lessen suffering?

They are very good at that. But it seems like they don't lead to enlightenment. So you can see the paradox that I'm struggling with.

Yes. So first, the relationship between suffering and freedom, realization, enlightenment, whatever, awakening. And so I want to honor, we've been in the last question talking about honoring.

I want to honor the suffering that you and I have gone through that has brought us here, without which we wouldn't be sitting here. I wouldn't, probably most of you wouldn't. Now one could say, when you look at how suffering arises, that a lot of that suffering is self-suffering.

Through egoic conditioned patterns, you create your own misery to a large extent in life.

But that's the conditioning. Nothing personal in that, and it's not your fault.

And life becomes heavy and serious. And then it becomes so heavy and serious that you can't stand it anymore. And that could already be the beginning of a movement in which, one could put it this way, consciousness is beginning to be forced out of identification with form through suffering.

Because the suffering was the complete identification with form. We saw that just now. Suffering was the complete identification with thought forms, with emotional forms, with reactive forms, with the body form, the me form, the egoic form, dreadful state.

And then suffering becomes such a heavy burden that it reaches a certain boiling point of intensity, when your consciousness begins to be, and this is really the best way I can find of putting it, your consciousness is beginning to be forced out of identification with form. You're being forced out. And that's, but the suffering in the first place was created by egoic consciousness.

So, what's happening now? And that's the beautiful, yes, it is a paradox, I think, question, paradox is mentioned here, or dilemma, if you understand that. First of all, egoic conditioning, collective conditioning, creates suffering.

And it, in many ways, it loves its suffering. It loves its identification with form. It loves the heaviness that comes with it, the problems that come with it, the conflict that comes with it, the fighting and the reacting.

And then it strengthens its form in those movements, so it wants that to continue. But that has already built in its own self-destruct mechanism through the grace of the divine. The ego, built into the ego, is a self-destruct mechanism, so to speak.

And so a point comes when it creates so much suffering that it, something awakens, as if the nightmare of identification becomes unbearable, and then you suddenly begin to wake up. And you may, you're still half in the nightmare, and then half awake. And it could be, you begin to wake up because the first time you hear a phrase from a spiritual teaching, you might hear, that could be it, or nothing at all.

It may not be that. It may just be the suffering itself. And so there's the beginning of a movement of consciousness removing itself out of the dream of form.

And then it drifts back into form. And then, but once it's started, that has a certain, begins to have a certain momentum. It is the the initiation.

So some, many people are initiated into that through suffering. And it's, it is rare for people to have such intense suffering that consciousness is forced out, totally out of identification with form, once and for all. It can happen.

But for most, it's a more gradual process. And that's awakening through suffering. And then comes a realization.

Once that movement has started, there comes an insight into the mechanism of suffering. You cannot have that insight from within the conditioned thought patterns that make up your suffering. The insight into the mechanism, the mechanical nature of how suffering is created for yourself, how you create it for yourself, how the mind creates it, the pain body, the part the pain body takes in it, that realization comes only because there's some consciousness that is no longer trapped in identification with those suffering forms.

Some, and through that little bit of consciousness that has freed itself, from there, you see the mechanism of suffering. How you do it to yourself is one way of putting it. How your mind does it to you is another way of putting it.

And so, then you see that at the end, that is a critical threshold, where for the first time, the possibility of living without suffering comes into your life. And the beginning of perhaps the realization that suffering may no longer be necessary for you. But you would never have reached that realization if you hadn't suffered up to that point.

So this can be would be beautifully expressed in the paradox which I may have mentioned once or twice before. Suffering is necessary until you realize that it is unnecessary. And so people have awakened, some people have awakened through suffering, but suffering is everybody's spiritual teacher.

There's nobody on the planet who does not have a spiritual teacher. And for 95% of the population, it's suffering. That's their teacher.

And that works. But then there's a growing minority in the population where some another factor comes in. And but even for that factor, for you to be receptive to that, which is the factor of the power of spiritual teaching, to be receptive to that, usually, you must also have suffered enough even to be receptive to that.

And often the receptivity and the openness to a spiritual teaching coincides with the first movements within yourself of your consciousness being forced out of identification with form. And then that little bit of consciousness recognizes the truth in a spiritual teaching. And then the process can accelerate when you've had the suffering plus the spiritual teaching.

That's a beautiful coming together. And it's often the case. And you can and then what you then experience is a, what many people here have experienced and are experiencing, is a considerable lessening of the heaviness in your life.

A considerable lessening of the suffering in your life. Like a burden falling off your shoulders. Not that there's, in most cases, it's not a complete end.

And it can well happen that periodically you get completely drawn back into identification with some egoic movement that produces suffering again. A wave comes and drags you along again. But then you come out again.

Once that movement has started, you will come out again. And then it's ah. So you move in and out of the dream or the nightmare and then come out.

And then the times when you're out may become a little longer. The clarity. So, of course, you've been coming to these talks and have been in contact with the teaching for maybe four years.

And you yourself, if there had been no inner change, I'm sure you wouldn't have come back after a year. If it's pointless, why come back? So you yourself know that something is happening and has happened.

Even though at times the mind may not want to even recognize that. Especially the egoic mind. Nothing is happening.

But you know it's happening. You wouldn't have come back. It's like something is shining through the conditioned forms and at times becomes obscured again.

And that is the awakening. Now, techniques. It is very true that nobody awakens through the application of a technique.

They may have their place. They may be helpful for a little while on your path. But ultimately, a technique creates some distance where there is no distance between your being and where you want to get to.

Because through some techniques, you want to get somewhere. And so you've created a distance where there is no distance. You've created perhaps even future.

Because you need to get good at practicing the technique. So you've created a future in order to find yourself. You create a distance in order to be yourself fully.

To be who you are. And so if you practice a technique, eventually you would have to drop it. Now, I don't think there are techniques here.

What we do is so simple. It is simply a redirecting of attention into the body. If that's a technique, I'm sure that the cat lives like that most of the time, sensing the aliveness within.

And any animal and the tree senses its own life. That's why animals and plants don't have that fear of death. They can, and when great danger comes, they withdraw deeper within.

Did you know that a cat purrs not only when the cat is happy? I was told by a vet that

sometimes cats purr when they are afraid. And I thought, how strange.

And then realized, of course, they withdraw deeper, to a deeper place within. When their form is threatened, they go deeper within. This is what an animal does.

It withdraws from the external world. And so it unites with life itself, with the essence, the formless life essence within. And that is blissful.

And so it purrs even when there's danger sometimes. And that the cat is not practicing a spiritual technique. It's a natural way of being.

I'm simply redirecting attention to something that is very natural, and that is sensing the life within. And you're not creating any distance, and you're not creating any time. You sense it now.

Now it is possible that even a simple thing like that can be misinterpreted by the mind and used in such a way that it becomes a technique to you. And then the mind says, I must get better at feeling the inner body, or I'm not quite there yet. I'm not feeling it fully enough.

I need to practice more. Whatever you can feel now is fine. You're feeling it.

It's there. The mind will create time. It will create some distance and will make it into a technique.

Now another one that could be, some people call a technique, is to accept what is. That's how everything in nature lives. It's aligned with what is.

That's not a technique. Now the mind might say, it's when the mind comes in, the mind can make it into a technique. Because with mind comes ego.

With ego comes needing to become something. And so it might say, I'm not yet good enough at accepting what is. I need to practice more.

I need to become better at accepting what is. So immediately it creates future. And then it makes what is a simple, a very simple thing, the most natural way to live, makes it into a technique.

And then you have time and distance. And you already have the beginnings of a problem. There's the beginning of a problem there.

Because then the very technique can become a problem to you. What is the opposite of all problems, to surrender to what is, can be transformed by the mind also into a problem. There's nothing that the mind cannot make into a problem, and won't make into a problem.

And there's nothing personal in this. It's not your mind. It's the mind.

Every mind does that. And so instead of looking for enlightenment, or complete enlightenment, or liberation, somehow it seems it is more helpful to speak in, we'll use the terms that the Buddha used, who did not give you a promising little apple or carrot dangling in front of you, saying enlightenment. This is your ultimate goal.

He had more, a more modest, used more modest terms, in a way more helpful. And he just called it the end of suffering. That's enough.

Another term he used is even less inspiring, and it's called emptiness, or nirvana, or nothing. But the end of suffering, the Buddha characterized his teaching as, I teach you suffering, which really means the origin of suffering. I teach suffering and the end of suffering.

And the end of suffering is enlightenment. Now the mind may have strange concepts about what it is. The end of suffering is the end of identification with form.

And that's it. And if there's already a lessening of suffering, then you must be on the right path. The burden is less.

Now the question often arises, true, nobody, we've already seen the technique doesn't get you there. So we're not really practicing techniques, although they could become techniques through the human mind. Some awaken through suffering only.

Some awaken through suffering plus a spiritual teaching. And the acceleration has already come into your life. It is a slow process that disidentification for most people who only have suffering as their teacher, unless they suffer tremendously, it's a slow process, gradual.

And they have to relive more and more the same dramas again, and again, and again. And there's the third marriage, the fourth marriage, and the fifth marriage. Just one example.

And then maybe other lifetimes, the same stuff again, not much better. And they still don't know who they are. I wrote a little line in the new book, which says, reincarnation doesn't help you.

If in the next lifetime, you still don't know who you are. And some found it not a technique. There was this spiritual teacher, Nisargadatta, who wrote this wonderful book.

Well, he spoke it, I Am That. And how did he awake? Well, he must have had his share of suffering that somehow must have gotten him, we don't know much about his suffering, but that must have gotten him ready.

So when he met this spiritual teacher, the spiritual teacher said to him something like, I

don't remember the exact words, you are consciousness, you are unconditioned consciousness, that's who you are. And didn't say much more. And then he saw him one or two more times.

And then he continued selling his cigarettes at a stall in the street. One wouldn't say, doesn't even seem a karmically very auspicious occupation. And all, and that little pointer went through his mind, that is still a thought form, of course, a pointer.

I am consciousness. I am consciousness. And he must have been so ready that that was all what was needed.

I don't know how many years passed, not many, a few years, when the realization to which those words pointed, began to arise in him. And he realized the truth of it, what the words pointed to. And that's how miraculous sometimes a spiritual teaching can be.

But even him, it didn't come in one instant. There was a period of time during which that kept working in him, the pointer was working. And then it came.

Ramana Maharshi, the other, another beautiful teacher, teacher, he was only 17 when he was lying on his bed, imagining that he was dead. That was, it happened by itself. A disidentification from form happened.

That's just happened to him. Most have to suffer up to a point. Humanity has been through enormous suffering as a whole, which each human, each one of you carries his or her share of human suffering.

And there comes a point now, and we are approaching it, we may already be there, where suffering becomes optional for humanity. Because humanity as a whole has suffered so much already. And there are now children coming into this world who, and often they are maybe born into a relatively conscious family.

And that's a new phenomenon in itself. In my generation, there was no such thing as a conscious family. Well, almost non-existent.

There may have been one or two examples. But I don't know, knew anybody who came, was born into a conscious family. They were all deeply unconscious.

Even the term conscious was meaningless to most people. Probably didn't start until the 60s, with a few exceptions. But the main thing is you, the realization which many of you have, that for your further evolution, awakening, so that consciousness moves out of identification with form, you may not need more suffering.

That's the grace of the spiritual teaching, that through the grace of a spiritual teaching, in fact, you see that that's not what you need. But should it come, then that's fine too. And you can see very soon, you probably won't be in it for that long when it comes.

Because whenever it comes, it will mean you're back identified with form. You're back lost in time, lost in mind, lost in pain body, lost in some reaction. But it's always identified with form.

And that's why you suffer. Not knowing yourself as the formless. And you're resisting something which strengthens you.

It is the identification with form. It strengthens the form. It's a dream.

It's so clear that it's a dream. When you see people move into that, and especially people who move in and out, you see it's just so clear one day. Beautiful, alive, vibrantly alive, peace, aliveness, joy.

And the next morning... I observed that when I was living in a commune. It's incredible changes in people, how they become, they became, they were all into spiritual, how they became free at times, free.

And then you would, but you would never know who would come down the stairs in the morning. And when you observe that in another, it becomes so clear that they are moving into a delusional dream world of that, which is identification with form. And then they have their theories about life, about themselves, about you, about other people, about the world.

They've all their interpretations, which are all totally distorted through form identification. And then they're telling you their story. They're telling you who they are, who you are, what's wrong with them, what's wrong with you, what's wrong with the world.

And then at some point they wake up again. If presence has reached a certain degree of intensity in them, it is sometimes possible to awaken them in the middle of the dream. Not easy.

You wake them, watch what's happening, what you feel, watch, be alert, what is there, what do you feel? If you're lucky, it works. But that requires already a considerable degree of presence that has been pushed out of the way.

I love that what they use in Buddhist monasteries, when people get drawn back into their mind, or even people when they talk a lot, they will say, when in the outside world they would say, why don't you shut up? They say, watch your mind. Watch your mind.

That's now considered an insult in a Buddhist monastery, because you're implying that they're totally unconscious. That's the greatest insult. Watch your mind.

Watch your mind. You watch yours. You're telling me to watch my mind?

Look at your mind, what you were going on about yesterday, all that stuff. Who is

talking? The mind.

But of course, it is a powerful, very powerful, and we call it a technique, to watch your mind, to be present as a witness to your mind. Is that a technique, or is it a way of being, a beautiful, awakened way of being? Is it a technique?

The mind will make that into technique too, and then I'm trying to watch my mind, but it's not working. A very powerful thing to watch your mind. Interesting too.

And then you see that it doesn't matter that much what goes on in there. It wants to matter, but it doesn't. Lottery.

We will also have more time for questions tomorrow, of course. I'm looking for something short now. Could you please talk about devotion?

Is there a devotional state that arises naturally out of presence? Yes, that is, it does. Devotion, which is strongly connected, very intimately connected with other things, other words we could use.

They're really all one. Devotion, gratefulness, and honoring. So when we used honoring before, that is an aspect of devotion.

Devotion really means to recognize the divinity within the form. Now, when through some misperception, you recognize it only out there, perhaps in a teacher or a guru, you recognize the divinity in him or her, through a misinterpretation of the mind, then you could be devoted to something external and believe there's the center of the universe, there's God, or there's the embodiment of God. So with devotion, sometimes there's the danger that devotion is directed exclusively to the external and you forget the source, which is within you, you forget yourself.

So it's the recognition of the divinity simultaneously, within and without. And then, of course, that devotion arises naturally out of the state of presence. It may not be immediately obvious or apparent as devotion, because people associate devotion with certain, perhaps even certain gestures or certain...

When we greet each other like this, this is very beautiful. We are not imitating some eastern thing, which some people might think. This is a very beautiful greeting that says, I greet God within you.

The God within me greets God within you, the one, the recognition of the one. I honor that. And sometimes you may go like that.

And this is what people associate with devotion, perhaps, or prostrating yourself. That's not necessary, but if you do it, if it comes naturally, that's beautiful, too. Not perhaps as a something that you should be doing, but if it's a natural thing, it's very beautiful,

prostrating yourself.

When, if it should ever come to you, it's a beautiful gesture, not to anything really out there, just as an act of complete surrender to the totality, to the one. And so there is the honoring that is devotion, the honoring of life in all forms. And even the deluded life in the form of humans, deluded into thinking they are this or that, egoic delusion.

And that is sometimes humans are the most difficult life form to honor, because there's so much in the way. Nature is so, the being is so much there. And with humans, there's the density of mind and pain.

But that also is accepted and honored, and becomes transformed through that. Even you accepting it in another is the beginning of the transformation. It's healing.

It's healing to come into the presence of someone who totally accepts you as you are. You're already being healed. That person isn't doing anything at all.

If he wanted to help you or change you, he would be doing something. But that's the deep healing comes with that. And of course, becomes greatly accelerated when you do it to yourself, you're accepting yourself completely as you are, including the pain body.

The quickest way beyond pain body, there's a question here says, please explain again how exactly the pain body works and how we get beyond it. Well, I'll summarize. Old pain, humanity's pain, and pain from childhood, maybe pain from many childhoods, you carry inside an emotional field of contraction, heaviness, turbulence, residue of emotion is added to as you go through life, through experiences that are not fully faced, not fully lived through things that are accumulated inside you.

You don't want to face this, don't want to face that, you don't deal with an emotion, don't feel it fully, then it gets stored, it gets becomes part of the pain body. Not only that, the universe consists of fields of energy. And there are energy, everything is an energy field.

The flower is an energy field that we happen to perceive in this way through our senses. It's a vibrating energy field. Every human being is a vibrating energy field.

And there are other energy fields that we don't even see with our senses. So those things can also happen, this energy field comes into you, because it feels drawn to, it recognizes something that at that moment is active in you, a vibration of pain perhaps. And there may be an energy field produced perhaps by other humans, there's so much stuff, heaviness on the planet, that joins with the pain body, it feels drawn, oh, I recognize something here, says this floating cloud of energy.

And then an unhappy person becomes even more unhappy. And then pain is then translated into thought, a painful story of my life and what life has done to me and others have done to me. And that pain came into you, joining your pain body

temporarily, because it says, oh, here I can feed.

It's a very normal thing. It's, the nature is full of things like that, where things feed on other things everywhere in nature. It's all the same happens in the unseen realm.

And we personalize it, we think this is me, this is my pain, this is me, this is my story, my pain, my unhappy life. When it's simply an energy movement, it came because it resonated with something in you. I wrote that originally in the book, but it was considered a little spooky, so we took that out.

But it's not really spooky. And there are other energy movements that sometimes will give added energy to your pain body. It could be a simple thing as a certain astrological configuration, and so that movement suddenly comes.

But we personalize it. It could be an entire energy stream that somehow you've linked into hundreds of thousands of people living in your state or in your city, who are producing a certain energy field. And because you're receptive, your pain body happens to be active, it is receptive to that, and then becomes magnified through that.

And it's nothing personal in it whatsoever. But it wants to become personal. It loves you to live under the illusion that this is me, my pain, my unhappy life, my suffering, mine, me.

So it wants your identification with it. This is another aspect of identification with form. And when that identification is broken, you can see it for what it is.

You can feel it, you can sense it, you can be there and witness it. That's all that's needed. The seeing, the recognizing, feel it.

So it is not personal. It is human pain. And even pain is a label.

It is some kind of energy, whatever it feels like. That's all it is. And you feel it, bring attention to it.

And that implies you cannot fully feel it unless you accept it. You accept that this is what is. So this is the transition from an unhappy person to being the witness of an energy movement inside you.

It's a huge transition from an unhappy me to being the observing presence of some contraction or some turbulence that you sense. That's not such a huge problem, is it? A turbulence that you sense.

It's weather, inner weather, a thunderstorm, lightning. And that's all that's needed for it not to feed anymore on you, on your thoughts, or on drama that otherwise you're forced to act out continuously. So you become, you're much more accident prone if your pain body is active and you're identified with it.

Because the pain body wants something bad to happen. It doesn't matter what, as long as it's bad. It wants turmoil and drama in your life.

And it will, if you are identified with it, it will create, it will move into the mind, and the mind will interpret your life in such a way that it is the most dreadful drama you can imagine. So that's the pain body doesn't like to be looked at. When it's, even here it can happen that a certain restlessness can come into you the moment we address pain body.

And that's nothing personal. It's the pain body, human pain body. So the world is full of them.

When you go out into the world, a certain percentage of people will be there with an active pain body. The others dormant for the time being. Maybe tomorrow it'll be active.

And they are identified with it. Some 10% of the time. I don't know what the average is.

30%, 25%, who knows. In some people it's 80 to 90%. And in some it's 100%.

Imagine a continuously active pain body. And some of these people have important jobs in the world. The pain body got them there.

They pushed everybody out of the way. And they're getting things done. And in the meantime, they're making everyone unhappy.

CEO of the corporation. And then suddenly he dies. The body couldn't tolerate it anymore.

And where does the pain body go then? A question here that is often asked, and a very good question. How to explain to children, or how to help children understand or become conscious of.

How could you please speak about sharing this way of being with children and teenagers? The best way of sharing it with children and teenagers is living it yourself. That's the primary way of sharing it.

Whether or not you say anything is secondary. So the being is primary. And only you can know whether there is a moment when words are appropriate.

So you living it means that in your family, in your home, or if you work with children as a teacher or some other capacity, that when you interact with the child or the teenager, you are present. There is stillness when you look at them, when you listen to them. There is space.

Giving them space, one could say. Give them space to be. And then they will do something, say something.

But the giving of space, being there as space for them. And then they come into that space that you are as you look at them. As they come in shouting, is dinner ready mom?

Now in most households, when you observe, there is an incredible lack of space. When you observe how the various members of the family interact. Their life is crammed full with things.

Thoughts, things to do, next thing to do, get this done, do this. Why haven't you done this? Everybody is continuously in a hurry to get to the next thing.

And when they are not in a hurry, they are watching TV or playing the video games, what many children grow up with these days. So they go from there to, and finally there is nothing to do anymore, and then they go to, and then they go to bed. An uneasy sleep.

And then they wake up with somebody shouting, come on, let's get it, it's late. Come on, get ready for school. Have you done your homework?

What? You haven't done your homework? And then they run, and the school is the same.

One thing after another. This and this, the next thing, the timetable is crammed full with things to do. Not one moment must be unoccupied.

It's dangerous. No space. But so it's, just to have space at home in the family, to bring space, not to be consumed by doings, comings and goings, and things, to be consumed by just mental interactions only, one mind thing after another.

It doesn't mean that you can't get things done anymore, but just acknowledge their being and your own. Just looking and listening is enough. Giving attention.

Not interpreting or saying, not the kind of attention that the mind says, okay, what have you done today? Have you done that? You still have to do that, don't you?

Have you put this on? Have you washed that? Have you put away your things?

They think that's giving attention. Or how do you feel? Is there something wrong with you?

Do you have a pain? Where is it? And again, they think they're doing good, but it's continuous.

It's fear-dominated. It's nervous tension-dominated interaction. Just look, listen.

That attention. Spacious attention. And you don't have to tell them, calm down, become present now.

Now, don't go into the future. Now, I want you to be present. Have you been present

today?

And not even as a formal thing, that the mind again says, okay, now, the whole family from now on we are meeting in the dining room at 8 o'clock and between 8 and 8.15 we are present together. That's a technique. Then presence becomes a technique.

And the children won't like it. They say, this is dreadful, I'm moving out. But you'll be surprised at the transformation that happens in children only through you living it.

That's all that's required. And if additionally, at an appropriate moment, you mention a little bit to the child about pain body, that can be helpful. Wait for an appropriate time when there is space, you are interacting, talking, and perhaps start with pointing to yourself, something that they may have just witnessed in yourself.

You know what you just saw, what I did this morning? That was old stuff inside me. There's still a lot of that.

And depending on the age of the child, of course, you use the words that are right for their age. So it's very easy for children to understand, even five and six year olds can understand about pain body, even though they may not, you may not use that term for them. But they can see it because children have pain bodies, some stronger than others.

And if you can show a child to be present as the witness, that's an incredible thing. And then you can save a lot of suffering for the child because then the pain body is not growing into an even bigger pain body. It will begin actually to lose energy the moment the child is able to observe it.

Usually after the event, when they've understood the basic principle of pain body, you can see that little green monster that was there again, wasn't it just now? Yes, it was. What did it feel like?

Well, it felt there was this, it didn't feel good at all. It felt there was this stabbing, almost a pain in my stomach. It felt really, I felt sick.

Well, yeah, that's a little green monster. And occasionally, and then it goes to sleep, and then it wakes up again, doesn't it? And somebody produced a children's book, which I somebody showed me a couple of years ago.

All in, maybe it's all drawings with very little writing, just short book with big draw big colorful drawings of a little boy get coming home in a very bad mood. I'm not, don't want anything to eat. He goes up to his room and then he feels worse and worse and he turns into red and green.

And then this huge monster comes out of his mouth and fills the entire room. And the child and the monster starts throwing things around in the room, throwing around his

toys. And he loves it, watching it, because he is it, he's doing it.

But then the monster touches one or two of his favorite toys and throws them out. And suddenly the boy says, why are you doing that? That was my such and such.

You're destroying it. And then that's the beginning of a recognition of that energy movement. And then the monster suddenly begins to shrink and then jumps into a little box.

So that is helpful, but to living it is the teaching. Especially words about presence will hardly be necessary when you live it. Children are usually a little closer to the truth than adults anyway.

So you don't even need to tell them, this moment is all there is. They know that already. And if they don't know it, that's an early age, they've been reconditioned to forget that, conditioned to forget that.

And that will be an important part of the transformation of consciousness, of course, is for children now to very quickly grow into conscious beings. Without having to go through what all the stuff we had to go through, many of them won't have to do that anymore. Some still will.

I'm talking still about a minority of the population, but it's growing. When you step outside, the sky, if it's still clear, look up for a while into the vastness of yourself. What a beautiful sound.

And the most beautiful thing about the sound is not the manifested sound, but the stillness that's listening. And this is how sense perceptions can also become a doorway, an opening. There's the manifested, to the mind, it's only the sound of rain.

It could explain it scientifically, how the sound is produced. But if you listen in stillness, then you're aware of the unmanifested, you are the awareness in which the sound happens. And any sense perception can be an opening into that when you're aware not only of that which is being perceived, but also of yourself, not the egoic self, but of yourself as the consciousness in which the sound happens, which is stillness.

And that's where this, that which you cannot analyze or define or explain mentally, that's where the peace comes from that is there. You're aware of yourself as consciousness. Consciousness is aware of itself.

Language is strange. And especially sense perceptions that are of anything that has not come into existence through human intervention, those things are particularly helpful. Or anything that comes into existence through human intervention usually has some mind to it, it could stimulate mind more easily.

But even there, if you're really present, you could watch a car like that also, but the rain takes you there more easily. And there's great beauty in going into nature and being the perceiving consciousness, a peace in which all that happens, to look at a tree and be aware of yourself as the awareness. And you might not put it like that, you can just, some person, somebody might say, it's just, there's deep peace in that, it's enough.

And at some point, you could even watch the TV news and be there in the peace and things get transformed through that. There's a suggestion in one of the questions, before we conclude, it says, could we visualize peace in the world? Let's see.

We're doing that already at this moment. Before we disperse, I wonder if this group could spend a few moments visualizing peace in the world. I feel such power in our deepening presence.

So that's happening already. And then be aware of that awareness, even when there's turmoil that you watch around you. There's a core of peace in the midst of turmoil.

And that transforms the world. The turmoil is ultimately a dream, the collective dream of form, the collective dream of clashing forms, all identified with form, lost in the dream of form. And not to give that dream absolute reality and say, this is dreadful, dreadful.

A question about presence, the state of presence. This seems to be a state that requires effort to maintain. The one that comes and goes, that people avoid life in order to maintain.

Please describe the difference between this apparent state and our true nature. How can the inquiry, who am I, be brought into our sessions with people? Well, we just practiced the who am I when we were listening to the rain.

Not in those words. And when you're sitting with someone, who am I is one of those pointers that you could use. In itself, it's nothing, but it points you back to the awareness that you are.

And at some point, you don't need that pointer anymore. You don't need to continue to ask yourself, who am I? You know yourself as the awareness.

When you're still inside, you don't need to ask yourself, who am I anymore, of course. It's just a, who am I is a thought, the last thought, hopefully. Now, is effort required to be present?

It sometimes may sound like it, but effort is not really compatible with presence. Because effort implies reaching out towards something. That's effort.

It's always a, you're not quite there. I have to get there. Where are you trying to get to the present moment?

I have to stay present, stay present. Ah, I lost it. So it's not really effort that is required.

When the mind looks at what we are doing, it might think, okay, now I have to make, really make an effort to be present. But it's an effort implies some point in the future or somewhere else that you need to get to. So it's not that.

But there is an intensity there in presence that the mind could mistake for effort. And what is the relationship then between the natural, as the questioner says, your true nature and that state of presence, if it is a state, and state may not be a good word. But does a state come and go or is a state permanent?

I don't know. A condition comes and goes. A state could be permanent.

Words, words. Your true nature is already the case. The flower, the tree, the animal, they are at home within themselves in their true nature.

And so are humans. But they have the dream of not being at home. But that's all very good.

And then humans wake up to their true nature. They realize, they become conscious of their true nature. Something that before was already there is now becoming conscious.

You can go to sleep. And in dreamless sleep, you merge completely with the unmanifested. And you are merged with that anyway.

And then you wake up again into the dream of form that you identify with and take that to be absolute reality. Our task as humans is to know our true nature, to consciously go into sleep, one could almost say, which is the stillness. But effort doesn't get you there.

It wants to happen. That's why you, from an external perspective, why we seem to be engaged in doing this practice, which isn't even a practice. We are engaged in this because this very event, us sitting here is part of the emerging consciousness that comes through humans where the universe is becoming aware of itself.

And whatever we say in language is a limited perspective. It's not, no words could contain the absolute truth here. Just a few helpful hints.

There's an evolutionary impulse at work. And us being here is part of that. There is an emerging consciousness.

There is a freeing of consciousness from the dream of form. There is an universal awakening happening. There is no end to the questions that the mind could then ask about it.

To what end? And what happens after that? And what's the purpose in that?

And then what? So up to a point, it's helpful to see a few things and then leave that behind, this continuous search for explanations, because that keeps you on the level of mind. That has its place.

You have to know when it's time to step beyond further questioning, trying to typical questions where you get stuck is, I want to learn more about presence. Can you explain a bit more? I haven't quite understood it, not fully.

Of course not. As the famous Zen dialogue goes, disciple asks the master. No, the master asks the disciple, Do you understand Zen?

Disciple says, No, master, I don't. And master says, Neither do I. Now there's something that comes that the mind does not like at all.

At some point, you give up trying to understand. And for many spiritual seekers, that can be the last obstacle or one of the last, sometimes the last. Trying to understand.

I have to understand before I can teach. I have to understand this fully. No, you don't.

You can't. But then how can I explain if people ask me questions I won't know the answer? If the answer is needed, if it's a true question and a vital question, then the answer will be there the moment the answer is required.

But that is a, it's a great thing when you realize it is time to give up trying to figure out and to understand the universe, myself, my relationship to the world, what I'm even, what I'm here for. You don't, it's so vast, you can't possibly understand it. The vastness even that you are, you can't possibly understand it, being it, yes.

And so that's a, it could, it's a relief. You don't need to understand. When I became peaceful, suddenly, I didn't understand more.

In fact, one could easily say that I understood much less than before when I was in turmoil. So that is the great renunciation also, to renounce having to understand. And then, out of that, something does arise.

A deep knowing that is beyond concepts, that is not easy to put into words, or you can't put into words. So this is, it is the shift from being based in thinking to being based, and of course, just language, in awareness. The shift from thinking to awareness.

It's one way of putting it. That is happening in humanity. The evolutionary leap that is going to save humanity if it happens, and it is happening.

The evolutionary leap from thought, mind-based creatures to creatures rooted in awareness. And it is quite possible that a day comes on the planet when humans, I'm not going to say much more about this, but I don't, I've got to go into that kind of thing. But if any of you are science fiction writers, you can take, pick it up as an idea.

It may not be easy to write about this because a time may come when humans on the planet don't think anymore. Neither do they speak anymore. They, an intelligence that is greater than the limited mind with its thought forms, its conditioned thought forms, then operates.

And they walk about in complete stillness. And whatever they need to communicate is immediately transmitted, but not through concepts. Now, I don't know how interesting a film would be about that.

The film would only become interesting if some unenlightened being arrives in that world. Because then there can be some drama. When I wake up in the morning, I feel so happy and blissful that I have no desire to go into the world and achieve things.

I've put up a list of goals next to my bed and that helps. But I'm so happy just as I am, it seems like a problem. I could lay there for hours.

Sometimes I do. Well, I can't see the problem. If I remember correctly, in ancient Greece, to be a member of the Senate, one of the requirements was, I don't know the exact number of years, one of the requirements was not to have done anything for 10 years or so.

There's great wisdom in that. Now, imagine writing that in your resume. 1990 to 2000, did nothing.

It sometimes happens, particularly in those humans in whom that peace that comes with the awakened consciousness comes suddenly. It sometimes happens that they find it difficult to continue to operate in the world. It's so sudden, that change from being run by desire and fear, which is what keeps people going mostly in this world.

Fear drives you to do things and the wanting drives you to do things. I want that, but I fear that, so I have to be active so that this doesn't happen. I need the security, I need to...

And when that goes, it seems the motivation for action has disappeared. If it happens suddenly, this happened to me also. And I spent quite a few years doing nothing and miraculously survived.

I'm not saying that this is what you should do. In most of you, the arising is more gradual. So you have time to find a way of incorporating the new state into being in the world and finding a way of being active that is not dominated by fear or desire.

A new way of doing that does not have the underlying energy field of fear or fearing or wanting. And of course, that implies that kind of doing comes out of the joy of being. There is joy in that kind of doing when it's not run by fear and desire.

So you then learn to do what is needed in this world, not no longer the obsessive doing, the obsessive and excessive doing that most people are engaged in because they need to become somebody and add more to me and that, not that kind of doing, but doing that is part of being here as a form and that involves being engaged in some kind of activity without loss of peace. In fact, activities into which peace flows, joy that is peace, peace and joy are one as the most essential energy in the doing. And so if presence arises very suddenly in you, then you may need some, need to wait.

You may need, may take years before you can fully live again and interact with the world in that new state. Maybe not, maybe if you have the help of a teaching, you can more quickly incorporate it and then begin to live it in this world. It took Ramana Maharshi many years before he could operate normally again.

He couldn't even speak or had no desire to speak anymore. He didn't even want to feed himself anymore. What for?

And so he just sat immersed in the bliss of being for years. It was his great luck that it didn't happen to him in the West because probably he would have spent the rest of his days in a mental home. But he was there in India and people came to feed him.

They left him, but somebody always would come and feed him. And gradually he would start putting food in his mouth. And showing some interest in the external, never an excessive interest, but just looking.

And then people would ask questions. And at first there was no answer. And then at some point he started scribbling an answer.

And then he was able to speak again. And then became quite, could function quite normally, but always, of course, with great stillness. And something happened to me that is similar, although not as extreme, fortunately.

Otherwise I wouldn't be here, would still be shut away. The complete loss of interest in future, the complete loss of all ambition, of achievement, of doing anything that lasted for a few years. And then gradually the ability came back to do, but in a very different way, doing with peace and joy.

With most of you, it arises more gradually, so you can more easily find a way of incorporating that into your life. But for some people, there may come a time when you feel it's pointless to do anything because it's so good to just be. Or maybe you just do the minimum.

There are people to whom this has happened who gave up great jobs in the world and became gardeners or things that was, they could easily stay, very easily stay present. They did manual jobs. They gave up the reputable job and just did the minimum of what was required.

All these things, there can be no predicting what will happen as this shift happens within you, but it is possible and it is beautiful. You are not condemned to passivity now. In fact, as you learn to live in that beautiful state, then whatever you do, when you finally do, has the creative spark to it.

It has quality to it, whatever it is, whether it's a simple movement of picking up garbage in the park and you're an enlightened park attendant. Hopefully you don't have a conceptual identity about yourself as that, because you're nobody, of course. If you are somebody picking up garbage in the park, you'll be unhappy.

But if you're nobody picking up garbage in the park, every movement is beautiful and there's a quality to that. Wonderful. Or whatever it is.

So some people feel called upon to let go of their complicated life and do something more simple. It's possible. Or perhaps you can somehow introduce that simplicity into your complexity and transform the complexity and make it all more simple and then become an attorney at law that does things differently.

Is that possible within the structures? I don't know. There are people who have companies who do things differently.

My publisher does things differently. It's not, it's a company where everybody has a share in the profit that's generated. Every employee, New World Library.

And they are all very happy. They all have a lot of fun. But it is possible.

Some of the structures are still capable of change if conscious humans are in there. And other structures are so rigid that they are incapable of change. So what happens to you as this arises?

Just you will make it. You will survive. Even if you do nothing for a while.

If that is what you are called to do or not to do. Be careful with the mind making it into a problem. My mind had given up by then.

And the only remnant that was left of problem was an innocent question that the mind would sometimes ask when I was sitting there on park benches. And the question was, how can you be so happy? I don't understand that.

It doesn't make sense. But fortunately, the mind didn't pursue it any further. It asked the question and then it gave up.

If the mind had pursued it further, it would have become a problem. I don't understand. I need to understand.

And even now, in my life, there are always periods when I do nothing. It is very beautiful.

I sit in my room, maybe an hour, two hours, or out in nature.

It's just being. There's great beauty in that. In just being.

Or sit in the car. If there's a traffic jam, beautiful. Just being.

Nowhere to go. Nothing to do. Just such aliveness.

Waiting at the airport. Of course, if you go into mind, then comes, this is preposterous. What do they think they're doing?

A couple of questions about money or charging when you see people. Whether to, what is the right way? Is it right to charge money for spiritual teaching?

Can you charge money for space? How much is space? The first thing to remember about this, this is one of the favorite ways of the mind of adopting a position.

Because many people have an issue with money because it's connected with survival and me surviving and making it. And so when you talk about it, to be aware that the mind will use it as a wonderful opportunity to identify with a mental position about it of right and wrong. An emotionally charged mental position.

And when you notice it in yourself, that's enough to notice it. And you're not trapped in the mental position. So I could speak to you for the next 10 or 20 minutes on why you should certainly not charge.

And it will make complete sense why it is right not to charge for spiritual teaching. And then I could speak to you for 20 minutes to say why it is right that you should charge. And neither one nor the other is right.

They are both right. There are two ways. There are ways of doing things to do with the world of form.

No more. And the mind can use it as a wonderful opportunity to focus on something on the level of form to avoid the formless. In this teaching, for maybe 10 or 12 years, all the teaching I did was either by donation or with a minimum charge.

Now, for the past few years, there has been a charge. And the strange thing is the average number of people who came to my intensives when I was charging donations was 15. Now the cycle came of charging for the teaching.

And the charging is to do with the form, not with the essence of the teachings, to do with the needs on the physical level of structures, physical structure, where one lives, where one meets, tapes. Everything has a physical aspect. Even when a spiritual teaching comes into this world, it somehow must have a physical aspect.

There's a book. Everything, this mic is physical. The room is a physical structure.

Mailing lists are physical. Tapes are physical. People are traveling.

I, this body travels from here to there. So inevitably, that comes in and money is connected with the world of form one way or another. There are organizations, spiritual organizations.

You can, they offer free teaching, and that's beautiful. Very often, at some point, as you become associated with the organization, you will realize that, yes, there is an expectation that you should contribute part of your income to keep the external form of it going. And the Buddha was given land so that the monastery could be there, that was form.

And yet, how easy it is for the form to take over and obscure the essence of the teaching, which has also happened in many organizations. The form, which was just there to enable that which is beyond form to get out into the world, grew and obscured the essence of the teaching. And everybody was only concerned with the institution, the external structures of the form.

And even money was then became part of it. So there's the danger, of course, that this can happen. Personally, I feel that there are certain cycles.

There was a cycle in this teaching where things were free or at a minimum. There is a cycle that came, it was this, when great numbers of people came and there was a charge and it worked beautifully. Thousands and thousands and thousands were reached and are being reached.

And yet I feel that here too a transition is coming. And I cannot tell you yet what form the teaching will take in the future. All I know is that right now that there's a transitional point that's being reached in the form that this teaching takes.

It's been perfectly fine up to this point, but I do feel that coming. So when we meet again, then perhaps we'll know what it is and what external form the teaching takes. Will it be free?

Who knows, perhaps. And so only you can know what is right for you, what feels right. And you will always meet somebody else who questions that.

I felt wonderful about not charging for many years until I met somebody who came. I told the story in the last practicing presence retreat when the same question came up. Somebody called me up and said, can I come to you for a session?

Yes. Said, how much do you charge? Said, there is no charge, donation only.

Said, oh, oh, okay. And then she came and said, I almost did not come because you

obviously don't value your work. You don't value what you do.

I said, oh, how is that? Well, you don't charge for what you do if it's valuable. And then she talked to me for an hour about that I was wrong not to charge and left without leaving a donation.

Spiritual teaching is something new for the West. The West has had institutionalized priests and so on. But spiritual teachings, especially that are not really part of an institution, is something, a spiritual teacher is something new in the West.

There's not really tradition of spiritual teachers. Maybe the last spiritual teachers they had were the Middle Ages, the mystics. But even the mystics were somehow associated with the church or the church didn't like them at all.

And so there is no tradition of that in the West as there is in India. Where in India, people are naturally generous. They provide for the livelihood of the spiritual teacher.

The few Indians who have come to me in the West, when I first started teaching in the West, I was always amazed that you don't need to, they don't even ask how much you charge. They assume that you don't charge and they give very generously. And it's beautiful.

And a friend of mine is a spiritual teacher who now lives in the West, an Indian woman, does doing good work. And she had a guru in India and she visited the guru in India. And her guru in India said, somehow she must have mentioned to her that she charges for her work in the West.

And her guru said, this is absolutely wrong. You must not charge. You are a prostitute if you charge for spiritual teaching.

Stop charging. She went back to the West and then called up everybody and said, I'm not charging anymore. This is it.

You can leave donations if you like. And so people continued to come and there was no charge anymore. And she's funny story.

Her income was dwindling and paying the mortgage was getting difficult. That's the world of form. She was not being sustained by an institution.

She lived alone. And one day a woman came and she knew she was wealthy and she just said, she showed her, she just bought these two or three beautiful dresses in some, look at that. Isn't that great?

And it only costs \$500 per dress. And then she left a donation. She didn't see this.

My friend explained to me, she didn't see the discrepancy. She left, I don't know how

much, 10 or \$20 after a wonderful session. She said, oh, this was so beautiful.

You've given me so much. And then my friend, the teacher said, and I felt angry, she said. And then she started chanting again.

There is no right or wrong here. You need to feel what is right for you at any, and what is right today may not be right tomorrow. There are cycles in life.

There are ways of doing things. And there are cycles. Then in my life, there was a cycle of inactivity.

And there was a cycle of activity. There may again come a cycle of relative inactivity on the external level. And there can be cycles in the world of form where you do things differently on the level of form.

So let's wait and see what happens. On the level of form as far as this teaching is concerned. Beware of emotionally charged, as I mentioned at the beginning, emotionally charged positions around money.

As many people have. They're very spiritual until it's to do with business. Until it's to do with their investment, meeting their investment advisor and the collapsing stock market or the real estate deal that's not going through.

And they lose it. It's to do with fear and survival. And the need for position.

I enjoy the relative abundance on the external level that is in my life now. There's money in the bank. Which has never happened before.

And so it's a new experience. It's enjoyable. But that's enough.

I've had the experience now. I never felt poor when I had no money somehow. From an external viewpoint, people would have said, this person lives below the poverty line.

And if I had known that, I might have felt bad about it. And occasionally I lived in places when people visited me, they were shocked. How can you live like that?

Like what? Well, the mattress on the floor and an old table and a chair. How can you live like that?

What's wrong with that? For 15 years, my means of transportation in my adult life was a bicycle. Beautiful.

I cycled around London for years in the midst of traffic. I enjoyed it greatly. One day my father arrived and he saw my bike.

He was in the hotel. We were looking out of the window. I said, do you see down there?

That's my bike. He said, what? He felt sorry for me.

It was dreadful. I must give you some money. I said, why?

You're reduced to riding a bike at your age? Now I drive an SUV. And some people say that's definitely not the car that Jesus would drive.

Maybe I'm using up my environmental credits accumulated during 15 years of cycling. But sitting in a nice comfortable car doesn't really feel any better than a bicycle. They're both beautiful.

Just equally enjoyable. Or walking. There's great beauty in walking.

So it's to just enjoy whatever comes to you in the phenomenal realm. And things change all the time. So certain things come for a while.

The forms come. And yes, you experience the forms. You play with it.

Abundance is not really to do with how much you have on the external level. I felt so abundant sitting on a park bench. True abundance comes from being out of being.

Being is abundant. It is the fullness of life. Jesus talks about it, the fullness of life.

Sometimes he calls it, it's translated as abundant life. Not many things. He never talked about accumulating things.

So it's not accumulating. Don't need to accumulate anything. But things may come to you.

Why not enjoy what comes? And then things may leave you or you leave them. That's beautiful too.

The Buddha left everything behind. Walked away. And later things came to him again.

It didn't matter anymore. But even on a material level, there were possessions. The monastic order was given vast amounts of land, beautiful gardens.

That came, it didn't matter at all. But enjoyable, yes. Any egoic remnants that are left in you, money is a favorite way of activating those.

They activate themselves again through that. And this is why the gurus, many gurus have fallen, especially gurus who came from the East, unused to the ways of the West. They came to the East and were confronted with money, sex, and power.

The three things that can easily reactivate the ego. Do you have any suggestions for the family members of or the persons with Alzheimer's disease where the loss is progressing relatively gradually? That is a strange thing.

The loss of memory. Being with someone, if the loss is happening slowly, directing attention within, away from mind, because mind is going anyway by itself. So directing attention away from thought into the aliveness that is within.

That's a beautiful thing you can do with a person when you sit with them. And instead of trying to remember things that you could eventually that will go, it's a very peculiar phenomenon. I don't have very much personal experience with meeting people who have that.

The mother of a friend of mine has Alzheimer. And in her particular case, he told me his mother was unhappy all her life. Tortured by thoughts about her miserable life.

Interpreting everything negatively. And he said when she was beginning to lose her memory, she was happy for the first time in her life. This doesn't happen.

Some Alzheimer patients are not happy. I know that. And there may be, it may also be that the pain body comes up more strongly.

But in her particular case, as the thinking faculty diminished, she experienced freedom from the burden of thought. But of course, with Alzheimer, you're moving towards, you're moving below thought. It can be a way, it is perhaps a way of the organism to free itself from the torture of the mind.

The body says, I have had enough. We are going to switch that thing off. I can't stand this anymore because the body has enormous intelligence.

And the body does things sometimes to just, that's it, I've had enough. And so the greater intelligence said, no more of this. And it finds the off switch.

I have no scientific proof for this. But I would suggest that as you find inner stillness, it is less likely that this will happen to you because you voluntarily step out of mind. The body doesn't have to do it for you.

You voluntarily step out into stillness. And the body loves that. The body does not love the mind.

It creates so much havoc in the body. An interesting study was made some years ago by a psychologist connected with Alzheimer disease. Usually these things these days, the way they study them is on the level of brain chemistry and so on.

Because medicine, even psychology is to a large extent addresses the material aspect, the physical aspect of illness. Even the mind is studied in that way. But a psychologist did a strange study.

There was a large convent somewhere in the States. And some of those nuns who lived all their life in that convent developed Alzheimer, a certain percentage, normal

percentage. And what he did, he studied the initial letters that each young nun wrote when they applied to be accepted in the convent.

And he could predict, he could tell from the way, not the writing, but the way in which the writing, the letters were written with a great degree of accuracy who would develop Alzheimer and who would not develop Alzheimer. And what he looked at was originality of expression, whether the writing had a spark of creativity to it or whether it was a conventional use of language without the spark that comes, the creative spark that comes into writing when you are connected with something within you that is deeper than the mind. So those that had the creative spark in their writing did not develop Alzheimer.

So I don't know whether he came to that conclusion that I drew from it or whether he left it at that. So those who were already connected with even perhaps in a small area of their lives and perhaps only a tiny opening into the unconditioned consciousness that is beyond the conditioned mind, those that had that did not develop Alzheimer. They had the connection to perhaps there was the stillness there, a link, not perhaps totally.

And those that didn't have it, he predicted, were much more likely to develop that. That's a very interesting study. So I believe that it is far less likely to happen to you as you voluntarily exit the stream of thinking, so to speak.

Then you won't have to be pushed out of the stream of thinking or the stream of thinking doesn't have to be switched off for you. So we do not know what awareness remains in those human beings to whom it happens. I have briefly observed some of them have never had a long interaction.

In some, there was definitely an aware presence still there without the memory. There's a beautiful story in a book that I was given recently. I don't remember the title, Small Graces or something like that, where he visits an old people's home, the author, and meets an old woman.

And all she does, she spends her time looking out of the window. She can't move very much anymore. And he comes into her room, whether she has Alzheimer's or not, or early stages, I don't know.

And she looks out of the window and he came to her ready to feel great pity for this person, who is reduced to staring out of the window. And she directed his attention to look at the tree, look at the clouds. Look at the sky, how beautiful.

Just look and you're right. Her life had become reduced to a window and it was enough because she went so deeply into that perception. She needed no more.

She taught him he was ready to feel pity for her. And he learned a beautiful lesson of looking without thought, just looking. So wonderful to be here with myself.

There may be some questions that haven't been answered, but I keep all the questions. So at some point, you might see an answer somewhere. By then, you would have forgotten the question.

On the formal level, every ending is a little death. And there's great beauty in that because all it happens, it ends on the level of form. This particular form comes to an end, the gathering.

The essence of the form does not.